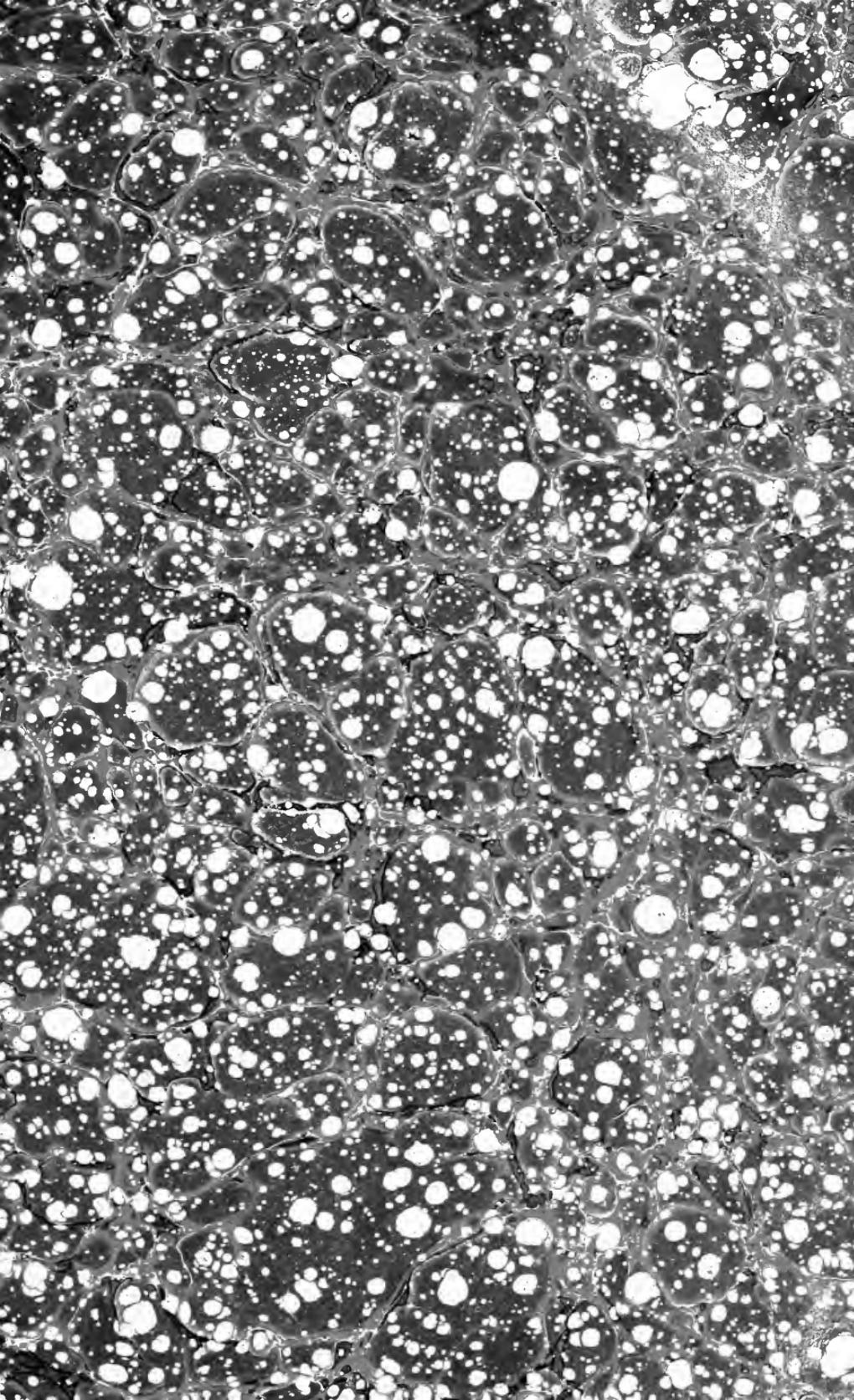


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THE
SECRET PASSION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE YOUTH OF SHAKSPEARE,"
"SHAKSPEARE AND HIS FRIENDS," ETC.

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written embassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit.
SHAKSPEARE.

NEW-YORK:
BURGESS, STRINGER AND COMPANY.

1847.

J. W. ORR, Sc.
NEW YORK



TO
THE ADMIRERS
OF
“Honie-Tong'd Shakspeare,”
AND OF THE OTHER ILLUSTRIOUS SPIRITS OF
THE GOLDEN AGE OF ENGLAND,
THESE VOLUMES,
WITH TRUE HUMBLENESS,
AND ENTIRE DEVOTEDNESS TO THE SUBJECT,
ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY
THEIR FELLOW-WORSHIPPER,
AND VERY OBEDIENT SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

M200783

HERE BEGINNETH THE STORY

OF

THE SECRET PASSION.

CHAPTER I.

What sport do I make with these fools! what pleasure
Feeds me, and fats my sides at their poor innocence!

Hang it, give me mirth,
Witty and dainty mirth: I shall grow in love,
sure,
With mine owne happy head.

THE WILD GOOSE CHASE.

He that will not, now and then, be a Calabingo, is worse than a Calamoothe.

THE VIRGIN MARTYR.

But do you know what fooling is? true fooling?

The circumstances that belong unto it?
For every idle knave that shows his teeth
Wants, and would live, can juggle, tumble, fiddle.

Make a dog-face, or can abuse his fellow,
Is not a fool at first dash; you shall find, sir,
Strange turnings in this trade.

THE MAD LOVER.

If laughter may be taken as a sign of happiness, then right happy were the boisterous, free-hearted merry-makers that were causing the goodly rafters of Dame Hart's kitchen to ring with their exceeding mirthfulness. Peal followed peal, and shout burst forth after shout, with so little show of dilatoriness, that, ere one was half spent, t'other was in full force. Had any listened to it but ever so small a space, he could scarce help being assured that the wantonest wits and very drollest varlets in all Stratford, ay, and for miles round, had

thronged to the threshold of their good gossips, the jolly hatter, and his no less jovial spouse, and were there, with their famous tales and excellent good jests, intent on having the walls about their ears, from the effect of the huge tempest of laughter they must needs be provoking.

Yet had little Tommy Hart and his affectionate little helpmate no such company. In very truth, they had but got about them, as was their wont ever since the two had been made one—which was no great time—one or two neighbors and acquaintances of some standing, who were most of their humor, in a readiness to join in all lawful pleasures, to speak a jest in season that hurt none, and promote whatever of singing, or telling of stories, or other goodly frolic, that promised amusement sufficient for the wants of the hour and the company.

Hugely did folk of more serious sort marvel at the wondrous appetite for, and enjoyment in, matters of drollery of Joan Hart; a laugh seemed as necessary to her as is water to a fish; and, to look into her admirable clear eyes, and into the corners of her pouting lips, you would be ready to take oath on it she had such provocation to mirth at her commandment, nought should reach her, however remote from lightness, but her smiles should break out at it as bright and gladly as though, under its assumed gravity, there was jesting of the very exquisitest kind.

Our Joan was small in stature, it is true, but her heart was of an exceeding bigness, containing, as it seemed, whatever was most

pleasant in all humanity, and in such measure, it looked to be in a constant humor of overflowing. But of this sort she had been from her earliest years. Never did Fate look so frowningly but she could make as though the frown was a smile of most covetable import. When she came to have lovers, she laughed famously at them all, which none could take so pleasantly as 'twas meant, save only little Tommy Hart, an honest chapman of her native town, of a like size, of a like humor, and of a like age as herself, who laughed at her with as true a zest as did she at him. Ere any long space was passed, they laughed at each other—in perfect truthfulness, it may be said, with all their hearts—and, in the end, the daughter of the honest woolstapler, to the vast contention of the whole neighborhood, became the wife of the waggish maker of hats.

And now were they keeping the anniversary of that very wedding, in their holiday bravery, with no lack of jollity, as may be expected, the which, if example could bring a sufficiency, there was like to be the prodigalest display of it ever beheld. For there was Joan, with her face as brown as any berry, and as full of laughter as is the sun of fire, and looking nigh upon as warm without, standing in the midst of a group, sitting round her; whereof there was no one whose visage indicated not all the mad frolic in the which they were then engaged. There were they, a group of some twenty or so of divers sorts, conditions, and ages; old and young, fat and spare, servant and master, alike enjoying themselves to the most absolute contention ever known.

Prominent among these was seen the unwieldy form of Winifred Poppet, in a fair miniver cap, a dainty partlet of white thread, and a stamel red petticoat of a most choice fashion, as intent on the sport as if she took no heed of such braveries.

Nevertheless, this was by no means the case, for a careful observer might have noticed that ever and anon, however busy she seemed with the game that was going on, she turned a sly glance to some part or other of her gay apparel, and twitched a fold here, and smoothed a rumple there, with a look of as infinite contention as ever brightened up the visage of threescore and ten.

By her side was seen the well-known figure of Jonas Tietape, in excellent favor among the burgesses' wives at Stratford, as a woman's tailor. That it was the cunning in his craft that made him so well liked of his customers, seemed evident enough, of all conscience; for gifts of person or counte-

nance, for the obtaining of a fair woman's approval, had he none at all, seeing that his features were by no means comely, his height so dwarfish, that an ordinary boy of some twelve or fourteen years, might, with no great difficulty, have glanced over his shoulder, and his head, arms, and feet of a bigness out of all proportion to the length and size of his limbs.

With these defects in him, Jonas was in such huge favor with his customers—ay, and with whoever were of his acquaintance—as was no woman's tailor in the whole county. And how came so marvelous a thing to pass, seeing that women, of all persons, are only to be taken by comeliness? inquireth of me the courteous reader. Thus was it: He had so comic a manner with him, you could scarce look him in the face but you must needs laugh outright. So many droll antics and grimaces had he, such odd sayings, so great a multitude of quaint, diverting tricks, and such an infinite fund of good humor at his disposal, that you might as well expect a hungry dog to be indifferent to a full platter, as that man, woman, or child, in his neighborhood, could hear him, or look on him, and carry on any melancholy or ungracious humors.

Yet it must also be recorded, he had gifts of some sort. Of a surety, as hath been said, they were not of person; nevertheless, I doubt not they did him more true service wherever he went, than could he have gained had he been ever so proper a man. There was no game known or heard of betwixt John O'Groat's house and the Land's End, he had not as pat as though he had played it all his days. Hot-cocles, or chuck-farthing, loggets, tick-tack, seizenoddy, barley-break, cross-and-pile, pick-point, shove-groat, and a lot more I cannot stop to name, were as familiar to him as his fingers and thumbs.

There was no sport at which he was not so skilled, it was rare indeed he met with his fellow at any. Cunning at the bow was he, as though he had sought to be held as a rival to Clym o' the Clough, or even to Robin Hood himself; and at quarter-staff none had dared touch him since he had cudgelled Sandie Daredevil, the big drover from over the border, who had made mocks at him, and called him scurrilous names, and threatened him most villainously, till—though no seeker of brawls—he took him to his weapon, and, with such earnestness, the rude Scot got so ugly a knock on the pate, he was fain from that time forth to take up his hostel in the churchyard. Then

at mumming was there ever so monstrous a dragon? or in the May games, who had eyes for any thing, but his most delectable hobby-horse? He roared so dragonish, it looked as though he would swallow a whole parish at a mouthful; and his curvetings, his neighings, and his paces, were so to the life, there was never a natural horse of any sort that was thought able to do them half so well.

But Jonas Tietape, in a suit of motley! Then was there famous shaking of sides! Of a Christmas or a New Year's Eve, perchance, when the spacious hall or kitchen was thronged with some of the merriest hearts in Stratford, he would don the cap and bells and parti-colored suit, and so choisely play his part, that the very wisest of the lookers-on could scarce help lamenting he had such lack of the fool in him.

Then, how brave a musician was he! 'Twas a marvel to hear him play the bagpipes. He blew them with such exceeding spirit, all the dogs in the parish would join in full chorus whenever he headed a wedding party, playing up "Light o' Love," as was his wont; and when he was in the humor of taking to the pipe and tabor, the morrice would be danced with such vehemency, the lookers-on could scarce help thinking all in it had no less sufficiency of wings to their legs than bells.

These gifts caused him to be held in such esteem, that his misshapen condition was never commented on by any save some few malapert, uncivil grooms, who, whenever they had sight of him, allowed their rude wits to run riot at the expense of his person and his calling, till they got cudgelled into more honest behavior. By those he was used to come among, nought amiss was seen in him. They had got so familiar with the strangeness of his fashioning, they had acquired a sort of affectionateness to it. His dwarfishness they got a liking to, far more suitable stature in other men failed to create. His large head had become an object of singular approval; and what else was in him unseemly or objectionable to ordinary persons, to them was a feature of matchless interest.

His apparelling was as little like that of common persons as was his visage or figure. He ever arrayed himself according to some conceit or other; and, being his own fashioneer, and having usually a fine choice of materials, he failed not on any occasion of mirth to be clothed in the most ridiculous garb eyes ever beheld.

At this present showing, he had on a jerkin of divers colors, made of pieces as vari-

ous in shape as opposite in fabric; for linsey-woolsey and Genoa velvet, taffeta and broad-cloth, fustian of Naples and Welch frieze, Norwich satin and Yorkshire kersey, were most disorderly mingled together; and as for the suitableness of the colors, what could be said of an arrangement where iron-grey and scarlet, murrey and sadnew color, watchett and russet, black and Lincoln green, were in closest neighborhood? Below this was seen a singular kind of breeches, of which one leg disclosed French sail-cloth of the coarsest sort, and the other painted arras, as ridiculously fine as the limner's skill could make, having so goodly a subject as the Queen of Sheba's stomacher. These had monstrous great pockets; and as amongst his sundry several ways of getting a living was the breeding certain little dogs, much affected by his richer customers, he was wont to carry one in each. One leg wore hose of orange tawny, the other purple; and the feet had on them severally, a boot of undressed leather, and an embroidered pantofle.

Laughing at the droll antics and smart sayings of Jonas Tictape, till the tears made themselves channels down his floury cheeks, sat Cuthbert Dredger, the stout miller of the Seven Meadows, in his well-worn leather jerkin, high boots, and well-stuffed gallegaskins as famously covered with meal as was his ruddy face, beard, and hair—whilst on one hand of him stood the good dame, his wife, and on the other his stalwart son—as like to his father in all externals as is one peascod like another—in their homely suits, showing such signs of the dusty miller, that even the shaking of their sides filled the air with myriads of motes.

In close neighborhood to the stout miller's son sat, spic and span as a new-coined groat, the youthful Margaret Hippocras, better known of the good folk of Stratford and thereabouts, as Peg o' the Twicken Bottle—her father keeping a hostel in the town so called—though, by some of her familiars, she was often entitled Blinking Peg, because of a slight infirmity in her vision, approaching nigh unto what some unmanly people said was a squint.

Next to her again lolled, almost at full length, the burley figure of Jasper Broadfoot—the ploughman of a rich farmer in the neighborhood—in the hugeness of his pleasure, his mouth stretching open as it were from ear to ear, and his freckled face half hid by the liberal show of sandy locks, that curled in straggling masses around it. Two old maiden sisters were close adjoining, sitting up as straight as darts, and seeming

to be almost as spare; their sharp noses and chins showing a manifest longing for a nearer acquaintance, and their apparelling scrupulously neat and clean, as though put on for the first time; nevertheless, they had been holiday suits with them any time these twenty years. They were screaming and clapping of their hands in infinite contentation at the passing scene; and, indeed, as absolute was their content at all such merrymakings in the which they had entered together with the same zest since they had been girls, making mutual monstrous exertions the live-long day to earn a decent subsistence as sempstresses, and, after working hours, enjoying themselves wherever there was a fair promise of creditable pastime.

Last of all was a smart little varlet, with a pair of merry dark eyes, lighting up as pleasant a face—albeit the complexion was of the darkest—as ever the sun shone on. His well knit limbs were famously displayed in his plain russet suit, and he seemed as though he could never tire of their employment; for, with all the quickness of an eel, he was thrusting himself now here, now there, with an intent as though he would on no account fail to share at the fullest in the sport that was going on.

This was no other than the jolly hatter, the laughing husband of the merry Joan: and, whilst she was now stooping down in the circle around her—they being all engaged in the monstrous pleasant game of “hunt the slipper”—swearing most earnestly the lusty Goody Poppet had got the slipper behind her ample person, Tommy Hart, who had cleverly contrived to get hold of it, unexpectedly gave his buxom dame so sore a smack where there was an excellent fair mark for such a purpose, as to make her regain her perpendicular ere you could count one, amid the loud laughing of the whole party, in the which she precisely joined, with a heartiness exceeded by none.

“Beshrew thy hand, Tom,” exclaimed she, with a sort of mock anger in her laughing; “and I do not complain to the Third-borough of thy monstrous heavy blows, I am a shotten herring.”

Here, catching a glimpse of the slipper gliding behind the backs of divers of the circle, she made a sudden pounce upon the tapster’s daughter, but, by some trick of the woman’s tailor, her foot slipped, and she came against Jasper Broadfoot with such force, as to send him against the two ancient sisters, who, in spite of their exceeding uprightness, were speedily put on a level with the floor.

“A murrain on thee, wench!” cried her laughing husband. “In seeking for the slipper, thou must needs be a slipper thyself. Where were thine eyes to lead thee so far from the object of thy search? Perchance, an thou canst not see, thou canst feel?”

So saying, with the slipper again in his hand, he took her smartly over the toes.

“Oh, thou villain!” exclaimed she, of a sudden throwing herself upon him, grappling him with both arms to secure what she wanted; but, lo! ere she was well down she felt a tap on the shoulder, and, directing her gaze that way, she beheld the point of the slipper resting there, as if held by some one behind her. She was up on the instant, and was just in time to see it, as it looked to her, disappearing down the gaping throat of Jonas Tietape. It was a feat of conjuring, such as he was wont on an occasion to amuse his wondering gossips with, but the simple Joan thought she could not miss having it, and grappled her acquaintance by the throat, to make him disgorge the desired mouthful, till he was getting black in the face, and she distinctly saw it in the hands of the young ploughman, flourished within an inch of her nose. Before she could recover herself, it had disappeared she knew not whither.

“Never saw I the like o’ this, gossips!” cried Joan, somewhat scant of breath, and looking in a huge perplexity. “It hath been said there are few quicker at this pastime than am I, and yet have I been toiling to no profit this half hour or more.”

This speech elicited no more sympathy than might be gathered from a general laugh both loud and long, to which many of the company added famous commendations of the poor woman’s patience and agility.

“I do think thou couldst teach a horse to eat his beans with a toothpick, dame,” observed Jonas, in his drollest manner; “thou hast so persevering a way with thee.”

“Slow and sure, Joan,” exclaimed her husband, approvingly.

“Nay, good fellow,” quoth the old miller, who was as ready as any at a jest, “had she taken such time to discover a husband as she hath to find a slipper, I doubt much thy fair commodity of hats would have seen a mistress in her this side of domesday.”

“A husband, quotha!” cried Jean, cunningly taking a sharp scrutiny of the circle around her. “They require no such horrible painstaking to get a hold of—Heaven be thanked! Had I thought my Tom had been so difficult of possessing, I would as

soon have gone for counsel to a Bedlam beggar, as have looked beyond my nose for him. Ah, goody, I have thee this time!"

But goody, with a chuckle that made her chin quiver like a goody aspen tree, exhibited to the disappointed Joan her two empty hands.

" By my halidom, I could have sworn I saw it!" exclaimed she, in some little emphasis, as she narrowly watched a very suspicious movement behind the two ancient spinsters. As a cat looketh after a mouse, did she continue to peer at their motions, slyly affecting the whilst to have nothing so far from her thoughts.

And thus it continued some little time longer, with a vast expenditure of jests from all, and such antics from the frolicsome woman's tailor, as helped the general mirth hugely. It so happened at last, however, that Peg o' the Twiggen Bottle, being intent upon a complete concealment of her defect of vision from hearing some pretty flatteries poured into her ear by the young miller, had got her eyes modestly fixed as it were upon the floor, and was so taken with the attentions of her companion, that she neither heard nor saw the efforts of her other neighbour to induce her to pass the slipper. Joan, whose looks were sharpened by repeated failures, detected the impatient pockings the inattentive Peggy was receiving, and unexpectedly dashed upon the possessor of the slipper before she had time to remove it, and, with a shout of exultation, which was swelled by that of all the circle, she caught hold of the long-sought prize, and waved it over her head in triumph.

The first use she made of it was, though with infinite good humor, to repay her husband the smacks she had had of him, and, malgre his attempts to escape behind others of the company, she desisted not till all was returned with a handsome interest, to the exceeding good entertainment of her several guests. Jonas Tietope must needs put his unshapely person in the way, making of such grimaces as would have unsettled the solemnness of an owl, but the slipper spared not him any more than his host: certes he got it in places quite opposite to what the giver intended, for with his antics he so flung himself about, that what was aimed at his head lighted on his heels. He was as nimble at his tricks as a kitten —now with his heels in the air and his hands on the ground, or each following the other like the sails of a windmill, whilst the head seemed to be shifting of itself into all sorts of unnatural positions, with such ridiculous looks upon the ungainly counte-

nance, all around laughed till their sides ached. And this of a surety did not lessen when the heads of two little dogs, doubtless made in some way uncomfortable by his strange movements, were seen suddenly to emerge from his pockets, with looks half of curiousness and half of alarm, making a sharp angry yelp, as if they liked not such uneasy motion.

The chamber in which these famous gambols were going on, albeit no other than Dame Hart's kitchen, was as proper a one to sit in as might be found in dwellings of greater note than that of the jolly hatter of Stratford. There were huge rafters went across the top, whereon was fixed a rude rack containing divers flitches of bacon. The chimney was of exceeding capaciousness, projecting far into the room, having within on each side, a commodious bench for the lovers of the chimney-corner, to whom the close neighborhood of the fire-dogs offered most choice attractions. Above, was an old crossbow, a rusty helmet, a stout sword and buckler, and a quarter-staff worthy of the Miller of Mansfield.

On a shelf were arranged an excellent show of clean platters, and on another divers cooking utensils as bright and clean as scrubbing could make them. Bunches of dry herbs were swinging in one place, and a bag with seeds close upon it. A goodly bundle of corn, in the ear, and a fair bough of hawthorn, full of berries, were seen not far from them; a skin or two were stretched out and drying on the wainscot; there was no lack of blocks and irons such as appertained to the hatter's trade, but they were evidently put away for the nonce, wherever good room for them could be found; and a space, nigh upon a yard square, near the chimney, was covered with the choice bal-lads of the time.

A large oak table had been thrust on one side to allow the revellers more space, and a liberal show of stools were huddled together in another corner. A huge iron pot was swinging over the fire-dogs, to which a stout, middle-aged woman, with bare arms, and a face that rivalled them in ruddiness, ever and anon came out of some adjoining chamber to look to.

On one occasion she was accompanied with an exceeding ragged boy, who looked not to be more than some six or eight years old. He helped to carry a log from the wood-house to the kitchen-fire, which he seemed intent on with so monstrous an earnestness expressed in his fat, foolish visage, that it drew upon him the good-humored jesting of divers of the company,

whilst, on a sudden, Jonas took him by the seat of his soiled and worn-out slops, held him at arms' length above his head, and made such monstrous mouths as though about to make a meal of him without any grace said. The boy struggled somewhat, to the great endangering of his sorry garments, that were so patched there was no telling of what color they might have been, and he bawled most famously, but only as it seemed to the heightening of the mirth of the lookers-on.

The woman observed this with a huge indifferencey, that some might have thought argued little of the mother in her; though out of all doubt the chubby, dirty, and ragged little urchin, on whom the frolicsome Jonas was playing off' his antics, was her child. She continued her attentions to the cookery, notwithstanding the boy occasionally set up so main a cry she must have been monstrous hard of hearing had she not known of it somewhere nigh upon the end of the street. At last it so chanced, his tormentor, by some odd contortions of all his limbs, thrust his unseemly head exactly upon the very opposite extremity to where nature had originally placed it, and hopped around the room on his two hands like a bird, supporting the frightened boy on his legs, which were standing above his head like a pair of monstrous horns. The shouts which this feat created made the mother turn from the pot she was so intent on.

"Heart o' grace, here's a sight to see!" exclaimed the woman, in no slight astonishment, and with some small spice of ill-nature. "Launce, lad! o' my life, thou ridest in a strange fashion: but fair and sooty, and the worst beast may be made to go its best paces."

Notwithstanding this consolation, the boy, who from the ordinary state of his apparel was known by gentle and simple as Rigged Launce, cried more lustily than ever: yet was his fright so ludicrous it was clean impossible for any to care about releasing him from his unpleasant position: and the merry knave continued his leaping till he was tired.

"I have put thee to most unblessed extremities, friend Launce," said he, as he gravely placed him again upon his legs, and with a mock interest appeared to arrange in the best fashion the boy's dilapidated garments. "But thou hast bad habits, friend Launce," he continued, pulling the poor boy's linen out of the wide rents in his several garments—"bad habits, which, albeit neither parson nor pedagogue, it is my vocation to mend. I pythe coine to my

dwelling when thou hast ceased to be wanted as a scarecrow, and I will do thy elbows all the service my craft can compass."

"In sooth, his apparelling be none o' the best," said his mother, with a show of gravity in the laugh she heartily joined in with those about her, "nor could it well have been so, seeing that after Dickon o' the Close had worn it seven year, he gave it to his ploughman Robin, who died the next sheep-shearing of the sweating sickness; and my poor husband, that's also dead and gone, had it on him in all seasons, thatching or ditching, felling or weeding from the Martinmas Master Gosling's brindled cow tossed Goody Skillett into the horse-pond, till that very Allhallows when Sir George Carew's Irish hound was drowned in the well; a matter of three year and a half, and since then Launce hath had them for lack of better."

"A fine choicee of masters, o' my life," cried Tom Hart to his guests, merrily. "I trust there may be no danger of hats serving so many."

"Nay, Tom, that would suit us but ill, I promise you," answered his ready helpmate, as she was assisting to get the supper in proper forwardness. "Of the two, I would liefer a lack of heads for the hats, than a lack of hats for the heads. For mine own part, were I a sovereign princess, I would make it felony, without benefit of clergy, for any one to shelter his crown in any covering whereof another man hath already had honest advantages."

"That is to say, dame," observed Jonas Tietape, with a grin of surpassing drollery, "an a man must needs take to other men's hats, he shold have no head to support his own withal."

"Odds pigs, Jonas!" exclaimed the stout miller, "that would not be a law to break on a sudden. However ill-lined a man's purse may be, methinks he could better afford to lose his hat than his head."

"Ah! feyther, that would I for one at all times," answered the younger Dredger, breaking off' for a while from his dalliance with the fair tapster.

"I warrant you," observed Jasper Broadfoot, opening his huge mouth with a horse-laugh such as might have disturbed the repose of all the steeds in the neighborhood.

Jasper Broadfoot had not much to say; but Jasper Broadfoot had at times a monstrous deal to laugh, and his little say was ever the prelude of a burst of mirth, of which the end seemed more problematical than all the pages of that famous master of figures, Master Euclid.

"Prythee heed not such idle fancies, good gossips," here observed Goody Poppet, with an air the while that spoke an infinite satisfaction with her fine apparel, the greater portion of which was of other people's wearing. "There be no harm in putting on a thing that fitteth you—the more especial if it cost nothing—though it hath been worn of another."

"Truly I think not," added the miller's wife, who did not disdain a cast gown from the lady of the manor, or any other worshipful person within five miles of her, which she appeared in with slight regard of the laws made and provided against the commonalty wearing what was allowed only to their betters.

"Dear heart, doth say so, indeed!" exclaimed Penelope Tressle, the elder of the two spinsters, with a smile of some ambiguousness on her spare visage. "For mine own part, I either mislike others apparelling hugely, or it misliketh me, for of other than mine own gear have I never donned since I have known the use of homespun: and Honour hath been afflicted with the like foolishness."

"Ay, that have I," said her younger sister, innocently, "and I thank God for it."

"And what art thou thankful for, thou scarecrow?" cried Tommy Hart, as he caught Ragged Launce up by the arm, and placed him on one of the stools, where in the light of the fire, he stood half abashed, with one finger to his eye, and the other hand grasping the tattered remnants of his lower garment. He was silent for awhile, even though all around him were busy making the very bitingest jests they could think of at his expense; and laughing seemed a privilege it was evident none cared to be deprived of.

"Thou hast monstrous cause for thankfulness, friend Launce," said Jonas, as he was soberly intent on making the boy's jerkin—which was a world too large—sit upon him with some pretensions to the court style; ever and anon standing at a distance, as though to admire the sit of it, and looking on the bystanders with that air of satisfaction with which an admirable workman is wont to shew his handicraft.

"What art thankful for, I pr'ythee?" cried Tommy Hart, once again.

"Methinks I have no great call for thanks at this present," observed Ragged Launce, looking steadfastly on the cuff of his jerkin; then, suddenly lifting up his eyes to his questioner with a famous shrewd look, added, "but an thou let me have a fair new cap to my head to wear on holidays, I will

have such notable cause for thanks, I cannot help being thankful the rest of my life."

"Why, thou cozening rogue, thou!" exclaimed the merry hatter, joining heartily in the laugh this speech raised at his expense. "But, out of goodwill to thy father, to whom I owe some thanks, the fair new cap thou shalt have, and with it such a suit withal as thy mother Maud and that grinning varlet Jonas can provide for thee out of one of mine."

This announcement was received with infinite contention; and, as may be supposed, none were so well content with it as Maud and her ragged boy, of whom the latter was so in especial, and minded not a whit the many rough tricks the merry knave kept playing upon him. In the meanwhile, Maud, assisted by Dame Hart and her more matronly gossips, had finished her cookery, and got it spread on the table ready for the now hungry company, who, nothing loath, sat themselves down to it in a presently, and were soon wondrous busy in essaying the several dishes. Nevertheless, busy as they seemed every one of them, their mirth scarce slacked an instant. The woman's tailor appeared to have a greater commodity of tricks, jests, strange grimaces, and odd distortions of himself than ever he had, whereof he displayed a most choice store, till some could not eat for laughing, and others could not laugh for choking; and, as for drinking, none dared so much as put a cup to his mouth in his sight, for, after the resistless, ludicrous grimace that was sure to come of it, a hogshead was as likely to be swallowed as a mouthful.

The first to begin, and the last to leave off every laugh that was set a-going was Tommy Hart or his fair helpmate; and so excellent an example was not like to be lost sight of in such a company; whereof the consequence was, the black-pudding cooled on the trenchers, and the porridge was like to be sent away scarce touched by any, had not some space intervened between the fits of mirth that were so general.

Of all those present there was but one who looked as if taking any interest in the meal before him, and that was no other than Ragged Launce. He sat on a stool cross-legged, with a smoking bowl of porridge in his lap; and though such excess of mirth, shrieks, and shouts, and frantic gesticulations proceeded from every one about him, Launce continued at his porridge as grave as a lawyer making a will at the death-bed of his client, blowing every burning spoonful with an intense energy that puffed up his dirty fat cheeks as big as those of a trump-

eter at the sounding of some monstrous high note; yet, in his eagerness taking of it so hot, the tears ran down his eyes in streams as he gulped the scalding morsel. But, when he had finished the bowl, there was a change, I warrant you! In an instant he was as alive to the fun as any, and, of the various voices that burst forth at every fresh piece of exquisite fooling on the part of Jonas, the shrill treble of Ragged Launce was far above the loudest.

In a short space, he was called upon to help to remove the trenchers, which he did with an exceeding readiness, taking care, as he turned his back to the table, to empty into his gaping jaws whatever eatable was left thereon.

"Launce!" shouted Jonas Tietape, in a voice that made the boy drop the trencher he was then carrying away. He turned round short, and picked up the fallen vessel, but answered not, for a reason doubtless sufficiently to the purpose. "Launce, I tell thee, come hither!"

The boy slowly approached—albeit with a countenance of some irresolution. "My trencher, sirrah! What made thee remove it without any request so to do?"

Launce seemed suddenly suffering from some convulsive action of the face, part of which looked afflicted with an awful swelling. He twisted his mouth about in an exceeding odd manner; but instead of answering, stared very hard at the questioner, and returned the trencher to the table.

"Ah, this be it out of all doubt!" exclaimed Jonas, "but what witchcraft had conjured away the goodly portion of exquisite dumpling that was on it but a moment since?"

Launce looked as though making desperate efforts to answer. The corners of his mouth were seen to move with violent twitches; the swelling shifted a bit, but did not diminish. Nothing, however, came of these movements, but a stare more fixed and of less meaning than the former one.

"Hast lost the use of thy tongue, knave?" No, it was his teeth he had lost the use of. In transferring the contents of the trencher to the capacious cupboard, that had already received the unfurnishing of sundry others equally well provided, he had on the sudden sent his teeth with such force into the thick piece of dough, that he could not withdraw them, and he could neither swallow the unwieldy mouthful, nor disengage his jaws for the purposes of speech. In short, his mouth was as firmly closed as though a padlock had fastened it.

"Alas, gossips, this is a sad business!" cried Jonas, looking wondrously doleful.

"The loss of my dumpling I care not so much. Though I do affirm it to be as delicate eating as dumpling ever was. Yet the loss of this poor boy's gift of speech is as deplorable a thing as can well be thought of. But I must needs essay a touch of mine art. I do hope to recover both these losses."

Ragged Launce was getting more uneasy every minute. His face had become marvellously hot and red, and his grimaces horribly violent. The company looked in silence it is true, but with looks of such meaning as any language at their commandment could not half so well have expressed.

The tailor with great gravity drew the boy towards him, muttering a strange jargon in a rapid voice that made Ragged Launce tremble to his shoes. Suddenly laying the boy's head in his lap, he caught hold of his nose with one hand, and his chin with the other, and drew open his mouth, exhibiting to all the huge lump of dumpling that seemed to fill the whole space within.

"Behold the virtue of mine art, my masters!" cried Jonas exultingly. "Lo! I have found my lost dumpling." A laugh long and loud testified the general acknowledgment of his skill as a conjuror. Launce made one desperate effort—a swelling rose in his neck of a size awful to look on—his eyes became red with straining—tears gushed over his dingy cheeks—he gasped as though like one taken with a sudden fit, and then drew a strong breath. "O my life, I knew not but you had done with your trencher!" said he, in a monstrous eagerness.

"Behold the virtue of mine art, my masters!" again exclaimed Jonas, in the same exulting tone. "Lo! I have found the lost speech."

In the midst of the roar of mirth which came on the heels of this marvellous discovery, there was heard a loud knocking at the outer door, at which all started, some with astonishment, some with alarm, and some with wonder. Ragged Launce in very fear slunk away and hid himself under the big settle; but failed not as he went to take with him a huge roasted pippin with cloves in it, that lay with others close at hand on the table; but, quick as he had done it, it escaped not the eye of his busy mother, who on the instant pursued him with the ladle she had in her hand, and, as he was ducking under the settle, hit him so sore a stroke with it on his pole, he set up a cry loud enough to alarm all the watch in town. Nevertheless, seeing he was likely to have no worse usage, as the enraged Mand forbore any further proceedings, hearing a re-

petition of the rude knocking more violent than before, he quitted his crying, and with one hand rubbing his bruised pate, with the other he thrust the pippin into his mouth, and soon lost all sense of pain, or fear either in its enjoyment.

"Who can it be?"

"What can any seek here at this untimely hour?"

"It cannot be thieves surely."

"Pray Heaven it be not fire!"

"Hath any ill-mannerly rogue been set on to disturb our pleasure?"

"Some drunken varlet mayhap, who has mistaken his lodging."

"Perchance it be some one for me."

"Nay, I expect 'tis I who am wanted."

"As I live, it was an awful knocking!"

"An it should be anything not of this world."

"Alack! do not say so, I prythee!"

"Mercy on us, there it be again! Oh it cannot help being a warning for us to prepare for our ends."

And thus every one cried out something, and every one imagined something, but none looked inclined to see what something it was. This state of things was made a thousand times worse by the woman's tailor suddenly assuming an aspect of the most absolute affright ever witnessed, whilst at the same time he uttered a cry so terrible all the women shrieked, and rushed into the arms of the men nearest them with such wondrous force, more than one was borne to the ground, and the rest were so jostled together, a flock of timid sheep set on by a dog could not have got in so small a compass.

Jonas stood aloof from the fear-struck throng with his hands on his hips, and his mouth at its utmost stretch, giving vent to so boisterous a peal of laughing as even those old rafters, familiar as they were with such sounds, had had no knowledge of.

"Why, thou intolerable faint hearts!" exclaimed he, as soon as he could get proper command of his speech. "If it be any thing less substantial than Goody Poppet's stout wench, with her lantern to see home her mistress, I have no more brains than a three-hooped pot." Whereupon the merry knave threw open the door, and flying like a wheel, turning round upon his hands and feet, he passed with a mischievous chuckle through the next chamber to the house-door, though the way was so dark you could not see your hand in it.

This declaration somewhat pacified the affrighted company, whereof the male part seemed the readiest satisfied — the most

scared being by far the quickest to assume an air of indifference—the miller and his son boldly saying they were assured all along it could be no other than their gossip's handmaid; but Tommy Hart honestly said, he had not been in so horrible a fear all his days, and vowed he would never rest till he had served that "sniptaffeta fellow," as he styled the tailor, with such another trick.

As they were rapidly gaining confidence, and Goody Poppet was preparing or putting herself under the guidance of her usual attendant in dark nights to return home, the door opened. Every one expected the stout wench so well known to them, but there presently entered one who was no more like unto her, than is the golden sun to a Banbury cheese.

The hood with which her delicate sweet face was enveloped was suddenly thrown back from her shoulders by the hand of Jonas Tietape, who had entered with her, and there was displayed the features of a young girl, of not more than twelve years, flushed as though with some great exertion, and wearing withal a troubled air, that did give to its surpassing loveliness an expression so touching, the horridest villain could not help feeling its exquisite influence.

"Susannah!" cried Joan Hart, evidently in a wondrous amazement as she recognized her youthful visitor. "Why, what hath brought thee here at this untimely hour?"

"Truly a great need!" replied as musical soft a voice as ear ever heard this side of heaven; and then she wrung her dainty little hands, and looked so pitiful, all present felt their hearts melt within them. "An it please you, good, sweet aunt, you return with me to Shottery on the instant."

The tender-hearted Joan stopped not for questioning. Leaving the child to the sympathy of her guests she flew for such things as were needful for her to put on for the journey, and before the more inquisitive of the company had extracted, from amidst her tears and sorrowful exclamations, aught beside her having run all the way over the fields, without any companion, in so dismal a night, Joan had returned ready to start. Her husband grasped his cudgel, and, having quickly lighted a lantern, and put himself in a like readiness, he bade his guests "good-night," and was soon anxiously accompanying the fair child and his excellent helpmate into the street.

CHAPTER II.

All I have done is little yet to purpose,
But, ere I leave him, I will perceive him blush ;
And make him feel the passions that I do,
And every true lover will assist me in't,
And send me their sad sighs to blow it home,
For Cupid wants a dart to wound this bosom.

THE LAWS OF CANDY.

Fred. She's free as you or I am, and may have,
By that prerogative, a liberal choice
In the bestowing of her love.

Lod. Bestowing ?
If it be so, she has bestowed herself
Upon a trim youth.

THE CAPTAIN.

THE musician sat turning of his cittern, close upon where sat an ancient gentlewoman, with whom it was evident he was not only upon terms of some intimacy, but, if looks and courteous words denote aught, the exquisite and very vehement gallantry of his manner towards her had touched her affections somewhat. Of a verity, he was a man like enough to impress a woman's heart with a sense of the most absolute affectionateness, for not only had he in visage and person such gifts as are usually all-powerful with a fair lady, the which were set off in a very gallant, peach-colored suit, with a cloak of murray velvet, faced with fur, and all corresponding appurtenances ; but there was that in his look, in his voice, and in his every motion—albeit there was a marvellous stiffness in the homage and tenderness with which he appeared to regard his companion, that smacked of an age gone by—that spoke him to be of no common sort.

Certes, the tall, antiquated, stately dame, who looked into his eyes with so manifest a conceit of ecstasy, was not of that proper condition that would in ordinary cases attract so admirable a gallant. She lacked youth most abominably ; and of charms had she no more than would serve to show she was not quite a dressed-up-anatomy. Her parchment visage—albeit there was paint enough on it to have done some service towards creating any Red Lion or flaming Phoenix worthy of being the pride of the whole city—only gave signs of life in the constant trick she had of forcing her mouth, which resembled a hole in a hose that had been horribly boggled in the mending, into the fashion of smiling ; and in the no less continual habit of hers, of raising her sunken eyes from the edge of her robe, that stood out all around her stiff as any board, unto those of the handsome musician, and then

as suddenly letting them fall to renew their long acquaintance with the fading pattern of her dress.

Her close vest and round ruff, her long waist and stiff farthingale, her lace cuffs and trimmings, with her gown of faded satin, looked as though done on stone ; and, had it not been for a sort of palsy, which she strove to disguise by keeping her chin fixed in her left hand, as though it were in a pillory, that gave her head an inconstant humor of motion, the curls of her perriwig—set with streamers in the old Venetian fashion, with a feather at the side—might as easily have passed for a cunning piece of statuary. Her right hand, however, partook not of such stillness ; for, though it was close on winter, and a pleasant fire of logs was burning on the fire beside her, she kept it beating the air with a huge fan very vigorously ; ever and anon furling it quickly, and tapping of her companion playfully, or shaking it at him, when his compliments seemed to her to have a meaning in them which appealed somewhat too directly to her too susceptible nature.

“ Nay, Master Dulcimer, thou must indeed,” exclaimed the dame, with an exceeding earnestness, furling her fan briskly, and then as rapidly opening it to the full display of a most moving scene from the romance of Launcelot du Lac, painted thereon.

“ By those divine and love-darting orbs, I am in no voice,” replied the musician, in a tone of exquisite melancholy, as he struck two or three tender chords upon his instrument.

“ Oh, thou silly flatterer, thou !” cried she, shaking her closed fan at him, though with a smirk on her visage that would have assured a less observant spectator she was well pleased at such language. “ But, prythee, tell me not thy voice is like to fail thee, for I have set my heart on hearing this ballad.”

“ A villainous cold, an it please you, sweetest lady,” said the gallant, bending over his cittern to the complete hiding his face for the nonce from the keenness of her looks, as he added, in a sort of passionate whisper, “ Sooth to say, the foolish liking I have for singing o' nights under the chamber that holds such a pearl of price, hath occasioned me so monstrous a hoarseness, I doubt I have more notes than a cuckoo.”

“ Dear heart, thou shalt have a posset on the instant !” exclaimed the enamored dame, rising with as much state in her movements as tenderness in her looks.

“ Nay, by this heavenly light, I will never

allow it, sweet Mistress Deborah!" cried the musician, suddenly rising with a famous humility in his countenance. "I am scarce fit to be noticed of such excellence."

"Thy hoarseness must be cured, Master Dulcimer," said the lady, curtseying to the very ground to the low bending of the gallant before her, as he with the deepest air of reverence took her hand to lead her back to her seat, from which she had got a pace or two. "Believe me, Master Dulcimer, 'tis the exquisitest posset ever made—the sovereignest thing on earth for a hoarseness. Her gracious highness Queen Mary, of glorious memory hath oft applied to my poor ability for the concocting of it, and hath expressed wonderful comfort ere she had scarce swallowed a mouthful."

"I should scorn myself ever after, could I suffer my humbleness to be raised by such matchless goodness, to taste what the highest of the land must have been but too proud to have enjoyed at such fair hands."

"They were well pleased enough doubtless, Master Dulcimer. Not only her late Highness, who honored me with many tokens of her most princely regard, but that puissant and most excellent sovereign Henry the Eighth, and his sweet son, the young King Edward, who is now a saint in Heaven, as likewise her present Highness the Queen's Majesty, hath granted me many precious favors; for, as thou art I know well acquainted, I have lived among princes and nobles all my days."

"Of a surety, that accounteth for the princely and noble air thou possessest so completely."

"In sooth I know not," said the lady with another majestic bend to the ground, in return for one of a like kind which followed the civil speech of her gallant. "But thy hoarseness, Master Dulcimer, getteth no remedy all this while. As it hath been got in my service, I cannot but endeavor its cure with all speed."

At this she was again, in all the dignity of a queen, sweeping forward to procure the promised posset, when the musician once more, with a reverence even more respectful, and a concern more absolute than he exhibited on the previous occasion, took her hand with many fine spun expressions of humbleness, and led her back to her seat. A little more stately colloquy followed, full of flattery on one side, and of vanity on the other. But as the speech of Master Dulcimer was evidently getting terribly thick, till it became more like the croaking of a raven than the voice of a gallant, she became monstrous eager the posset should be tried.

At last when she found the flattering humility of her companion was in no way to be moved, and possibly in some measure tired of the many bendings to the floor, her notions of proper ceremony bade her make in return for the many equally lowly her gallant honored her with at every fine speech, a thought seemed suddenly to have entered into her head, the which, had she not been so intent on the sweet things she heard, would have found a place there at the very first.

"By my fay, I had clean forgot!" said she; then raising her voice to a pitch somewhat of the sharpest, she cried, "Mistress Varnon! haste, I pray thee, and make a posset for worthy Master Dulcimer."

This speech was directed to a most comely maiden, who stood concealed from view in one of the deep windows. Possibly she had gone there for the better seeing some music she held in her hand; and perchance the youth at her side was offering what assistance he had at his commandment in the proper understanding of it, but methinks, if this had been the case, there had been no such need as there seemed for the passionate words that one gave the other, and the deep fondness which shone in their looks, and in their exceeding closeness. Surely, it needed not the youth's hand locked in that of the maiden, whilst the other arm encompassed her girdle with so firm a pressure, her little ruff ever and anon seemed like to be crushed against his jerkin, for the proper understanding of music of any kind; but this was not all. These two, it was evident, had been as regardless of the antiquated dame and her formal gallant, as were that goodly pair, of them. Their loving dialogue, for such it was out of all doubt, so filled every sense, not only were their companions lost sight of, but of the whole world were they in a like forgetfulness.

"Methinks it cannot but be wrong, my dear lord," murmured the blushing maiden, her heart beating against her lover's breast, like a bird newly caged fluttering the bars of its prison-house. "'Tis true aunt Deborah useth me with exceeding harshness, but I can scarce reconcile me to the part your friend is playing, which cannot but end in her great unhappiness, and to leave her in a state of such terrible disappointment as must needs come of it, when all is discovered, looketh to me cruel and unmaidenly."

"Tush, sweet heart!" exclaimed the disguised gallant, pressing her to him more fondly. "The usage you have at her hands is such, that for it nothing can be too great a punishment. She hath employed her ut-

most for the complete marring of your happiness, merely because the Queen liketh not my Lord Southampton to marry, and so leave her with one servant the less, of whom she can command attentions that in her old age she should have never thought of; and to be in favor with her Highness, Dame Deborah, hath not only done me all manner of ill offices with the Queen, but hath spoke of you to her in so horrible, infamous a manner, as your pure heart can have no notion of."

"In very sooth now, dear Wriothesley, hath she done me this huge unkindness?" earnestly inquired his indignant mistress, whilst big tears trembling on the long lashes of her fair eyes did most eloquently speak her sense of her kinswoman's injustice.

"As I live, my sweeting, 'tis so!" replied the youth with a like earnestness. "I was told of it by one who was present, and I shortly after received of the Queen a sharp rating, with numberless proud peremptory terms, for paying any sort of heed to one so discreditably spoken of."

The lashes of the fair listener became so heavily laden with those most choice pearls, that they could no longer have footing there, and came stealing over her downy cheek as if well inclined to linger upon such dainty ground.

"Sweetest life!" whispered her lover with increased vehemency of love at the sight of her tears. "There is no bearing this monstrous tyranny. Will's stratagem is the very properst stratagem that could have been devised, for without it how could I have had access to thee, my life! my heart! for a single instant?—and 'tis her own unconscionable vanity that is to blame, if she take to heart at the discovery, the being made so absolute a gull. But I am assured no harm will come of it. Her heart is as stiff as her stonacher, and she hath about as much feeling as hath the oak floor she passeth over with so stately a step."

Mistress Varnon wiped away the tears that rested on her cheeks, as though they meant to settle there all their days; but she attempted not any sort of reply.

"On the knees of my heart, I beseech thee secure my happiness!" continued the devoted lover, pressing the trembling girl to him with a greater shew of affectionateness than ever. "I have all things in readiness; it needeth but thy consent to be free for ever of the infamous slanders, and continual tyrannies to which thou hath of late been subjected."

The looks of Mistress Varnon were fixed on the floor, and an expression of indecision

appeared to linger over her exquisite sweet countenance, but her heart was beating faster than she thought any heart had done, since the world was made.

"Do I not love thee, a thousand times better than life!" murmured the young nobleman in a tone of tender melancholy, it was scarce possible for one of her loving nature to listen to unmoved. "In honest truth, my whole soul is so wrapt in thy infinite perfections, if thou deny me the precious gift of them, I shall take such a hatred to my miserable life, I will to Ireland on the instant, in the hope some rebellious kern may help me to a speedy riddance of it."

"Nay, that thou shalt never do," replied the loving maiden, in tones so soft and low, and trembling withal, they could scarce be heard.

"Wilt consent, then, my sweeting, to what I have in my exceeding love for thee proposed?" asked her lover, with a look that spoke how much depended on her answer. Her lips just opened, and at the same moment her head drooped upon his shoulder. The reply can only be guessed by the manner in which it was received. The lover pressed his fair companion in an embrace, that seemed not likely to be ended shortly; and he only raised his lips from the rosy resting-place they had found without any effort at resistance, when her name, repeated in her aunt's sharpest tone, and a warning cough from Master Dulcimer, awakened the devoted maiden from a sense of bliss to which she had given herself up, heart and soul.

Recovering as quickly as she could the music that had dropped from her hand in the ecstacy of her feelings, she was busily pointing out to her lover, seemingly equally intent on the notes as herself, a passage which they were trying in a low voice, when the tall figure of her kinswoman, handed along by the disguised music-master, with a formality that made any great speed impossible, came upon their hiding-place.

"Excellent proper scholars, o' my life!" exclaimed the pretended Master Dulcimer. "Mistress Varnon provest herself worthy of the lessons of her most admirable sweet mistress."

Here followed the courteous bend that closed every such sugared compliment—the which of necessity was acknowledged by another from the lady equally ceremonious.

"In sooth, Master Dulcimer, I must needs own she is a close scholar, and an apt," replied the antiquated virgin; the suspicions excited, and the sharp reproof she had pre-

pared, changing, in consequence of the timely flattery, into smiles and good will. "And she hath of late so liked the singing of madrigals, she is no less impatient than am I for the coining of yourself and boy to help us in the indulgence of this exquisite rare pastime. But I must not let aught interfere with the curing of your hoarseness. Go, Mistress Varnon, use thy utmost skill in the making of my choice posset; prepare it with all proper speed; and take with thee Master Dulcimer's boy into the garden to help thee gather the herbs that are necessary in the making of it."

It is doubtful whether the young lovers were more pleased to escape from the room, than was the stately spinster to get rid of them. She had a little scheme in her mind, intended to force her companion into a confession of the unconquerable passion she fancied she had inspired him with, for, though he had said many tender and gallant things, she had heard nothing of a sort to be compared with the intensity of her own affection; but his reserve she attributed to his modesty. She could not believe him to be no better than a poor musician. In her own mind there was no conviction so perfect as that he was some prince or other, so smitten with her attractions, as to willingly seek disguise to obtain the pleasure of her sweet society. His appearance, his manners, and his language, she had for some time pussed, pronounced to be as a long acquaintance with courts could alone obtain; and in this rare delusion she fooled herself to the top of her bent.

She considered that he wanted encouragement, and that nothing could afford it so well as a declaration of her feelings in his favor. How to bring this about in a discreet and incidently manner she had long thought of, and at last satisfied herself she had conceived a plan excellently well adapted for her purpose. She had scarce well rid herself of her exquisite fair niece and her disguised lover, when she turned a gaze upon her companion of such infinite affectionateness, as no language can do justice to, whereupon, meeting his bright glance, in the which lurked—though she saw it not—a look of sly pleasantry, she as suddenly cast her eyes to the ground, and sighed as though her heart must needs break in a presently.

The seeming musician regarded her for a moment with some sort of compassionateness, as though loath to carry the deception further; but the very absolute ridiculousness of the love-sick anatomy before him, together with what he knew of her infamous

behavior to her gentle kinswoman, and a remembrance of how completely the happiness of two young and amiable people depended on his successfully carrying on the jest, satisfied his conscience for the nonce; and furnishing his looks with the proper gravity, and his carriage with the customary starchness, he bowed himself upon her hand, which he took into his own with a monstrous show of gallantry, and in words of the movingest sort, requested, as he was denied the most sweet delight of entertaining her with his voice, she would, out of her marvellous conlescence, lap his spirit in that rapture he never failed to enjoy to an exquisite excess, when listening to her incomparable performance.

The only reply she gave was conveyed in a sort of hysterick sob—a sudden casting of her eyes to the ceiling, as sudden a clasping in both her own of the hand of her gallant—then a look at him brimming over with affectionateness—and lastly, a sudden movement with stateliest step, her eyes fixed on him all the way—to the virginals.

"Oh, Master Daleimer!" exclaimed she, in a most perturbed voice as she sank on the seat that stood before that instrument.

Master Dulcimer said never a word; for, having seated her, and made his leg with the gravity expected of him, he was diligently employing himself in turning over the leaves of Phoebus Morley's "First Booke of Billets to five Voyees," which, with various other madrigals, pastorals, roundelays, ayres, and catches by John Bennett, Thomas Welkes, John Farmer, William Bird, John Dowland, and John Withey; with a goodly heap of older works by Saeryngham, Davy, Browne, Sir Thomas Phillips, Fairfax, Cornish, Turges, Tudor, and Banister, were partly on the virginals, and on a stand adjoining.

Whilst thus employed, Aunt Deborah had time to recover in some measure from the intense pleasurable bewilderment into which her gallant had thrown her, and, with an exceeding audible sigh, and a marvellous loving glance, she began a few bars of quaint and pleasing symphony. Ere she had proceeded far, however, she stopped.

"In sooth," she inquired, with a smile that might have been becoming enough some forty years before; "in very sooth, I know not what to sing."

"Such exquisite sweet singing as thou singest at all times," replied her companion, somewhat enameored, "rendereth the choice of bat slight concern. Be assured, whatever pleasest thee to sing, shall infinitely please me to hear."

"Excellent Master Dulcimer!" exclaimed his antiquated mistress, in a very fervor.

"Hast thou no moving ballad, most admirable Mistress Deborah—no touching ditty that should express, with a natural force, the desperate passion of some love-lorn heart? "Hast thou—"

"Have I not, sweetest Master Dulcimer?" replied the lady, clasping her hands powerfully together, and taking another sharp scrutiny of the ceiling.

"A song of such ravishing sort must needs command my very deepest attentiveness," observed the disguised musician.

"But it is one of my poor contrivance," whispered Aunt Deborah, her look again downcast. "A trifle, a very trifle, dear Master Dulcimer, which thy superior skill cannot but despise."

How the gentleman protested the greatness of his opinion of any production from such a source, may readily be imagined; and the modest depreciation with which the lady spoke of her performance ere she could be got to commence the singing of it, it needeth no great stretch of fancy neither to have a proper notion of. Suffice it, that, after many delays, a wonderful display of affection in her looks, and with a constant fire of sighs that ought to have melted the most obdurate heart, Annt Deborah betook herself to her instrument, and, in a voice of the shrillest, commenced the following words:

AUNT DEBORAH'S DITTY.

"Honey-sweet lips!—Most tempting fruit that groweth,

Fain would I taste, if tasting there might be :
Honey-sweet lips!—Most rosy flower that bloweth,

Fain would I own, if such might bloom for me.

Oh, doleful strait!—The tree doth grow so high,
I might o'er-reach, would I such fruit devour ;
Oh, sad mischance!—The plant so low doth lie,

I fear to fall stooping to pluck the flower.

Honey-sweet lips!"

It was with a great to do the disguised master of music kept the grave and deeply-attentive visage he had all along commanded; for, in sober truth, the very monstrous passionateness put on by the starched and ceremonious maid of honor to Her Highness Queen Mary, of sanguinary memory, was so extremely ridiculous, that any ordinary man might have laughed his head off ere his mind would have well got rid of the humor it would have put him into. Such turning up of eyes—now to her companion,

and anon to that part of the ceiling that was directly above her head—such sugared looks that no conserve could have been half so sweet, had not the vessel that furnished them had more in it of the fashion of the empty gallipot than of any such tempting cates as good housewife's do put in them—such smiles of infinite love as must have penetrated the very core of a millstone, had they beamed on any thing human, of whatsoever sort, more desirable than the shrivelled-up lips from which they originated—such blushes of modest bashfulness, a tithe of which would have sufficed the wants of St. Ursula's eleven thousand in any extremity—such sighs as no undone church-organ ever gav., whereof the bellows lacked wind beyond all toleration—such devotion, such prudence, such longing, such coyness, such hope, such doubt, and such fear, were never exhibited in the singing of any ditty since the beginning of time.

Nevertheless, the assumed Master Dulcimer leaned on the virginals over against the singer, beating of the time as it were with his hand, and seeming to be quite rapt with such bewitching minstrelsy—albeit, his midriff was in extreme jeopardy with his efforts to restrain his mirth. Peradventure, he dared not trust himself to speak, though he had no lack of encouragement so to do, for speech gave he none at all; yet the suffusion of his eyes, which arose from his powerful struggle to preserve his gravity, was regarded by the love-sick Aunt Deborah as a sure sign her ditty had touched him to the quick, and after a short pause to allow time for it to produce its due effect, she proceeded :

SECOND VERSE.

"Tempt me no more!—With excellence so winning,

Scarce can I look, and not as soon be won ;
Tempt me no more!—Though knowing nought of sinning,

With such sweet sin I needs must be undone,
Oh, sunless joy!—Methinks these sugared baits
Do hold to me an unresisting lure;
Oh, nameless bliss!—Methinks there honor waits,

With honest bonds to make my wish secure.
Honey-sweet lips!"

Nature could hold out no longer. The assumed Master Dulcimer was just on the point of giving way to those powerful inclinations he had with such huge difficulty withheld, when, as the singer, with amorous sighs, and looks, blushes and smiles, a thousand times more exquisitely ridiculous

than those which accompanied the singing of the first verse, closed her ditty—as if the pent-up passion she had so long kept within proper bounds had now burst its barriers—she had no sooner got to the last note than, with an energy that nigh pressed the breath out of his body, she on a sudden threw herself forward into his arms, and doubtless would, if she had dared, have helped herself right liberally to the tempting objects that had formed the burthen of her song.

The gallant was so taken by surprise, he could do nothing against such an assault but struggle as he best could to get free; certes, Aunt Deborah had got so close a hold of him, and he was placed in so exceeding awkward a position, his liberation looked to be no easy matter. At last it came with a quickness he had hardly dared to hope.

Whilst he was tugging and twisting with more vigor than gallantry to rid himself of the embrace of his antiquated mistress, the door of the chamber was suddenly burst open, and there rushed into the room, seemingly out of breath with the speed he had used in getting into it, the long-legged, iron-visaged, ancient serving-man, that was at once her steward, groom of the chambers, gardener, bailiff, cellarier, clerk of the kitchen, running-footman, and a good score of other callings, and had been so ever since he could clean a trencher, empty a flask, or grow a salad.

That he was intent on the saying of something of the very utmost consequence there could be no manner of doubt; nought but the most absolute necessity could ever have induced a serving-man, used to the rigorous formalities of so stern a mistress, to break into her privacy in so rude a manner as he had done. He would himself have thought the world was at an end, had he dared to do so on any common occasion. But, whatever was his intent, of a surety he said nothing, for he had scarce got well into the room, when he stopped short in his speed as though he had seen a basilisk.

He, who had ever regarded the stately Aunt Deborah with an awe scarcely less than that he would have felt standing in the presence of the Queen's Highness, and would as soon have expected to have discovered the grave Lord Burghley cutting purses in Tothill Fields, as his proud and formal old mistress allowing of the most innocent familiarity from an individual of the opposite sex, even had he been a prince, beheld her in a situation with so mean a person as a singing-master, which, to put on it the most charitable construction, was exceeding equivocal. He was struck dumb

with surprise and consternation, and stood with mouth wide agape, and eyes staring with all their power.

But how did Aunt Deborah take this untimely interruption? At sight of her serving man, from whom she had exacted the respect due from one having absolute power and empire, she was nigh ready to die with rage, vexation, and pride. She who had set herself up as so immaculate, of such wondrous dignity, of such unparalleled perfection in all things, as one so infinitely superior to those around her—she was not to be approached without every possible show of humility and reverence; to be detected by her own serving-man in an act so opposed to her former bearing, as having tender dalliance with a gallant, was shame unspeakable. The offence of finding her under such circumstances would at any time have been beyond forgiveness—bearing the rude character the old man's intrusion did, it was deadly.

The affectionate old spinster resumed her starched appearance with what facility she could, and livid with shame and anger, she glared upon the bewildered and terrified domestic. “Begone, rascal!” cried she, in those deep tones that express, much more than violent, loud exclamations of any sort, the powerful feelings under which the speaker is laboring. “Out of my house! Pack, on the instant! An I see thy villainous visage another hour, I will have thee scourged out of my presence!”

“But, mistress!—prythee my lady!” exclaimed the serving-man, trembling, and pale with fear.

“Dost dare speak to me?” replied the enraged dame, stretching out her arm in the direction of the door; then adding, in a higher key, “Begone, knave!”

But to do her bidding the poor man had not the power. His knees knocked together, his hands and head shook as with the palsy, and he looked as one about to give up the ghost.

“Strip off my apparelling, and the badge of the Varnons, and get thee hence for an unmannerly, meddling jacknapes.”

“But Mistress Varnon hath run off with the musician's boy, an it please you my lady!” stammered out the serving-man, as well as his fear would allow him.

Aunt Deborah gave a sudden start at this intelligence, and her paleness was visible, in despite of her paint.

“What sayest, fellow?” demanded she, solemnly. “Dost dare to say a Varnon is capable of such infamy?”

The man, as he gained courage, told his

tale ; which was to the effect that, as he was working in the garden, he spied the musician's boy and Mistress Varnon in a wonderful loving humor, and thinking their behavior marvellous strange, he kept an eye on their movements. They seemed for a while to be gathering of herbs, but made no great progress in their labor. In their rambles they at last came to the wicket at the bottom of the garden, and they were so loving and so intent on each other's discourse, they took no heed that they were watched. They presently opened the gate and went out, and, on the man's going there to see what they could be at, which he did not like doing too quickly, he beheld them both galloping away on fleet horses.

Aunt Deborah listened in a state of breathless amazement, evidently in such a rage with her gentle kinswoman, her anger against the serving-man was clean forgot. She was uttering the bitterest denunciations against her for bringing such shame upon her family by her intolerable infamousness in running off with so low a person as a musician's boy ; when her attendant having obtained some slight sense of security, ventred to say that he believed the musician's boy was no musician's boy at all, nor any thing of the sort, for, as he was looking after the runaways at the gate, a swash-buckler-looking knave, in a terrible swaggering mood, came up to him, and bade him tell his mistress to be under no concern for the disappearance of the young lady, for my Lord Southampton had her safe, and that they would be married within five minutes of their leaving the house. Moreover, he had given him a tester, to tell one Master Dulcimer to join his friend instantly.

"Master Dulcimer!" screamed his mistress, looking around ; but if she sought that admirable master of music, her eyes must have been of a very choice sort to have seen him, considering that he was then on a swift horse, on the track of his young friend, and the lovely partner of his flight, having made the best of his way out of Aunt Deborah's house, as soon as he found himself released from her too affectionate embrace.

The love-sick virgin now saw that she had been cozened. She had managed to regain her huge fan, and had employed it, in its wonted manner, with great diligence, when she suddenly fanned it, with a look as full of hate and rage as might have belonged to a Medusa, broke it over the head of the astonished menial, and stalked out of the room, desperately intent on vengeance.

CHAPTER III.

Beware, delighted poets, when you sing,
To welcome nature, in the early spring,
Your numerous feet not tread
The banks of Avon ; for each flower
(As it ne'er knew a sun or shower)
Hangs there the pensive head.

D'AVENANT.

Here I lay, and thus I bore my point.
SHAKSPEARE.

"Now, dame, prythee put forth thy best housewifery, for amongst our company this day will be one for whom I have an especial respect."

"'Tis Master Shakspeare, then, I lay my life on't."

"Ay, that is it, dame ; and one more worthy of all honor either amongst such as be players, or with folk of any condition, distinction, or goodness, whatsoever, we are not like to see in our time, I promise you."

"Marry, he shall have the best entertainment we can give him, and with such heartiness of good-will, as he may, perchance, lack in a braver feast. But who have you provided to meet him, sweet heart ? for, methinks, there should be some choice in the company which one so esteemed is required to grace."

"As for that, dame, I can but ask mine own fellows of the Fortune, most of whom must depart with me, on the morrow, for Windsor ; and, though they may not be so approved in their art as those he hath been used to at the Globe, I doubt not at all he careth for Ned Allen sufficient to be content with the fellowship of such humbler spirits as he is wont to have at his board."

"Heaven be good to him, for he is a most sweet gentleman, and his great deserts are not like to suffer discredit from an honest woman's prayers. But it is fit we should have no brawlers nor breedbates, nor rustling braggadocios amongst us to disgrace him and ourselves ; for, if I mistake not hugely, there are such to be found among our friends of 'The Fortune,' and it will as little credit you, dear heart, who, I am proud to say, hath as honest a name in his calling as hath any man, and, moreover, hath as fair a provision for his living as might satisfy some of higher estate, as it will honor a guest who, of his eminent qualities, demandeth at your hands whatever respect and affection it may be in your power to afford."

"Well said, sweet heart ! O my life, an excellent proper speech ! And as it regard-

eth my state and prospects, what you have said be as true as truth itself; and I thank God for it, and will never abuse his favor, be assured. But as to our fellows there be some, I am afraid, of rather a graceless sort; nevertheless, I think not of them so ill that they will show their unworthy humors before so trae a heart as Will Shakspeare. I must needs have Ben Johnson for one."

"I should like him the better, could he better govern himself; for he can be, at times, as excellent good company as might be desir'd. But he is not free from envy of another's greater good-fortune, however assured he may be of his worthiness, and hath a boisterous, rude way with him, at times, that looketh to be ever intent on a quarel."

"Nay, dame, speak of him not so ill. Ben is a king, in his way."

"A king, i'faith, that, ever and anon, must needs be using of his sceptre by way of eudgel, for the better showing of his authority."

"Like enough, dame; nevertheless, he is too great a personage amongst us to be slighted, and he is, besides, well known to Will, so that we can have no cause for omitting him."

"For mine own part, husband, I have no wish that way; indeed, I have oft found infinite pleasure in his company; so let him come, o'God's name, only I would be more content were I assured he would come in a fitting mood. But who else shall you have to meet sweet Master Shakspeare?"

"Why, dame, I cannot but have Will Byrds; he hath a most exquisite throat for a ballad, of any one of my acquaintance; and Humphrey Jeffes, he playeth the viol like a master; and John Shanke, he telleth a good jest with a marvellous proper spirit; and Tom Dowton, he knoweth tricks of conjuring that would surprise you mightily; and Ned Colbrand, and Francis Grace, and Samuel Rowley, they sing a three-part song in a manner which is a delight to hear; and Gabriel Spenceer—"

"Surely that is he who broke the constable's head."

"Ay, but none of us are constables, sweet heart! so *our* head will be in no danger."

"I warrant you. But if he be so violently disposed, one head is like to be no more respected by him than another."

"Fear nought, dame. Gabriel would not harin a mouse; but there doth exist such an antipathy between a constable and a player, that if a cracked crowne come of it, it is no marvel; and, peaceable man as I am, if, of the two, one is to be hurt, me-

thinks he should be the constable—therefore Gabriel d-serveth no blame. Besides, he hath many commendable gifts, which should make him good company. Possibly I may chance to fall in with Aranin, or Missye, or some other choice spirit, whose tricks and jests cannot fail to garnish our entertainment right pleasantly."

"As you will, dear heart; but fail not to have sufficient recourse to your late, which, in my humble thinking, be as delicate garnish for a friend's banquet as any honest heart need desire."

"But it is not reasonable all should be so good a wife. And now I must needs be going. I have pressing business. I am ordered to bring my dogs and bears to court, for her majesty's games. Spare neither pains nor pence, Joan. So God be with you!"

"Good bye, sweet heart; and if you see my father, I pray you give him my love and duty."

"I will not fail, and will strive to bring him with me to dinner; for I know he will be right glad to meet Master Shakspeare."

The foregoing dialogue had been spoken by persons aiming at no great pretensions in any of those things most commonly assumed. They were simple of heart, and simple in manners: had been married long enough to know how to appreciate each other's good qualities, and to conform completely to each other's tastes. So contented a couple was not often to be met w.t. They had no ambition in dress, in great company, in fine furniture, or in gay living; they cared only to be a comfort to each other, and a source of pleasure to those around them. Edward Allen had lately built a playhouse in Cripplegate, which, as with a prophetic eye to its results, he named "The Fortune;" and, having married the daughter of Phillip Henslowe, who had realized a fortune by his gains, as the master of a company of players, and of a collection of dogs, bulls, and bears, which seemed in equal favor, Allen found himself obliged to take a prominent part in both performances, and was now hullooing on one of his four-footed company at Paris Garden, and anon applauding as favorite a biped at the Fortune playhouse.

These different pursuits, at times, made strange confusion in his speech. They would then so mingle in his thoughts, he could not mention them with the qualities that were singular to each and every one, but would speak of one of his best bears as of a most moving tragedian; whilst he, who had drawn floods of tears from a crowded

audience, was mentioned as the bravest dog at his game that had been seen any time these ten years.

His wife, though she had been bred, as it were, in one continual scene of worrying and biting, had a monstrous dislike of all quarrelsome ness; but the baiting of bulls and bears she had been so used to look upon, that she could no more regard it as strife, than could a miller decry as noise the turmoil of his mill-wheel. She could see, with infinite contentation, a bull pinned to the ground by a savage dog, whilst some of his fellows were being tossed in the air, yet would not allow the cat to be catching of mice, she so hugely disliked dumb innocents to be harmed. Amongst her friends she was universally esteemed, as more than ordinarily grave in her humor, charitable, pious, discreet, and kind; and if her husband thought her face or person not so good as those of many women of his acquaintance, there could be no doubt of it he found her heart a wondrous deal better than them all. So, as it must needs be, Edward Allen and his yokelfellow led an exceeding happy life.

Leaving his fair helpmate to play the part of the good wife, which she was wont to perform with such perfectness there was not room for the finding of a single fault, the courteous reader must a while with the husband, whose excellences of disposition were no less admirable; for, having, under the care of his fair partner, been getting himself ready for a journey, the whole time of what hath been set down of their discourse, he started off in his best suit and cap, and making forth from the liberty of the Clink, where he had his dwelling, he proceeded across a field lying towards Lambeth Marsh, called Pedlar's Acre, wherein were some buildings, towards which he made. These proved to be the ordinary habitations of certain of his company of beasts before they were suffered to make sport at the Paris Garden. Here he remained not long, ascertaining from an old woman remaining there, that his father-in-law and partner had gone off with his best bears and dogs to the Queen's Majesty, at Somerset House. Making his way from thence to the water-side, he jumped into a boat, and was soon crossing the river with as much speed as a pair of oars could make for him.

On landing at the stairs, he was allowed to pass the yeomen there on guard, for they knew him well, and shortly found himself greeted by a bullet-headed, bald-pated, old fellow, with legs like nine-pins, a body like

a barrel, and a face as glowing as the flaming cinders in a blacksmith's forge. He was surrounded by a motley group, some holding dogs and some bears, and there were with them certain officers of the queen's household, who appeared to be exceedingly intent on what was going forward. They were in a part of the court-yard, where a post had been set up over against the window of the queen's privy chamber, where she was wont to regale herself with a sight of the sport. At other windows that commanded a view of the games, were groups both of ladies and of gallants; whilst, surrounding the spot which contained the bear-keeper and his beasts, was a throng of curious people, young and old, who thought themselves fortunate in being able to see the queen witness such royal pastime.

The new comer being addressed as "son Allen," in a rough but not unfriendly voice, by the person just alluded to; this pointed the latter out to be no other than Phillip Henslowe, the most approved master of the sports of the Paris Garden all London could produce, and a long-established favorite with its good citizens.

After a few words of cheerful greeting, and an affectionate inquiry after his daughter, which elicited the loving message she had sent, the old man set his son-in-law to fasten one of the bears to the post, he giving directions the whilst to him and the holders of the dogs, and ever and anon addressing the beasts themselves, that they should, on account of their having such noble spectators, exhibit such nobleness of sport as should make them worthy of so much distinction. Then he would turn to some of the queen's officers about him, and lament the irreparable loss he had sustained, in the last winter, of two of the very cleverest bears that had ever come out of Muscovy. He told how they had been brought over to him when cubs, and what absolute pains he had taken with their education, till they had become the most accomplished bears that had ever hugged the breath out of a mastiff. And then he digressed to certain of his dogs, whose qualities he vaunted as excelling that of the best that had ever been known in the memory of man, either in the baiting of bulls or bears; nay, for the matter of that, they were of such unmatched courage and fierceness, they would as lief fly at a lion or a tiger as at more accustomed prey.

Old Henslowe did not want listeners, and he talked with the air of one who takes the

subject of his discourse to be of such high consequence it can admit of no rivalry; and though, like all his fellows, he had his jerkin and cap off, and his shirt-sleeves tucked up above his elbows, and his apparel was in every way the reverse of the courtier, he lacked not attention, nor, it may be added, respect; for he was an oracle in these matters, and they were in such fashion, there were few at court who desired not to have some knowledge of them. His son-in-law was busily engaged in fastening up the animal that was first to be baited—a huge, shaggy brute, that stared about him with a solemnness of visage as of a justice of the peace at the least.

He had scarce done this, when a stir in the crowd gave notice that the queen was approaching; and, sure enough, her highness appeared in great splendor, closely attended by the noble Sir Walter Raleigh, then first in her favor, and surrounded at a convenient distance by her courtiers and ladies in waiting. Even, at that distance, the marks of age and decay were but too visible in her visage; and, moreover, she wore an expression of inquietude, which, despite of the efforts of her courtly companion who stood at her side, after she had seated herself on a chair of state placed for her at the window, to entertain her with such discourse as he knew she most affected, scarcely left her an instant. On her appearance, all heads were uncovered, and an huzza set up, which caused the dogs to bark, and the bears to growl, as if they must needs testify their loyalty, and the satisfaction they had in being set by the ears for the entertainment of such exalted company.

Presently a clear circle was made round the bear at the stake, none being allowed to come within it, save only those engaged with the dogs. Old Henslowe took by the neck one of the powerfulest of his mastiffs, and showed him to Bruin, which set him to growling and struggling furiously to get at him; and Bruin turned his solemn visage towards his enemy, with a glance from his eye and a glisten of his formidable teeth, that savored of any thing but affection. The old man aggravated the dog by shaking him at his prey, and sohoing him on, not forgetting to remind the beast that the eyes of the Queen's Highness were upon him, and that it behoved him to show of what high blood he was, and who had been his master.

At a little distance his son-in-law was encouraging another dog to the attack by similar means, and others were being held

in readiness, all of which looked desperately eager at the sport. Presently, old Henslowe let loose his dog, and went direct at his prey, like a hawk at the quarry; but Bruin was an old hand at the game, and, standing on his hind-quarters, looked ready for his assailant, let him come as savage as he would. The mastiff flew at his throat, but the bear knocked him aside with one of his fore-paws, like a dexterous fencer. He made another spring, which would have succeeded better, had not Bruin got him in his arms with so fierce a hug that it made him squeak for it. Before, however, he could do any serious hurt, the other dog was let at him, and Bruin was fain to let go his hold of the first to defend himself from the second.

The game now became wondrous exciting, for the dogs were eager and fierce, and the bear marvellous quick in his movements, and snapping and pawing off his foes with a dexterousness that bailed their attacks and won him great applause. The audience seemed to take great interest in the combat; even her highness looked as though she regarded it with more attentiveness than the sugared compliments of the noble gentleman at her side. Hitherto all had looked on, with too much respect for the great personage in whose company they were, to attempt any interruption, save some hearty commendation now and then from one or two of the more privileged; but old Henslowe, in the intensity of his honest pleasure in the fight, clean forgot under whose awful eyes he was, and made the air resound again with his plaudits, which, with even-handed justice, he bestowed with equal venomence now on one party and now on the other. Now it was “Brave dog!”—anon “Brave bear!”—then was heard, “Well fought, Jowler!—a good grip, Pincher!—closely hugged, Bruin!” and the like encouragements, which seemed to have vast effect, for the dogs worried the bear with a spirit that increased every minute, and the bear seemed every minute to put forth a more valiant opposition. Edward Allen looked on with quite as great a satisfaction, though he was not quite so boisterous in giving it words; yet he could not forbear once remarking to a bystander, that Brain’s action was of the true, high, Roman dignity; and Jowler’s delivery pointed him out as the first tragedian of his time.

When it was thought the bear had been sufficiently worried, and the dogs appeared to tire of the sport, they were put on one side, and another bear and other dogs were brought forward to supply their places.

As this fight was but a repetition of that already described, methinks there be no need of giving here any account of it. Nevertheless, it afforded as abundant contention as the other.

It so chance'd an odd accident put an end to the entertainment in the most summary fashion. As the second bear was being released from the stake, he slipped his collar, and made a sudden rush at the crowd around. After so much fighting, it was not supposed he could be in any very amiable mood, so his unexpected attack threw the whole company into the horriblest fright the eye ever beheld. In endeavoring to get themselves out of his way, they tumbled over each other by dozens: in the confusion, the dogs broke from their keepers and flew at their liberated prey. Old Henslowe and his son-in-law rushed forward to part them; but, in the press, they were knocked down, and bear, dogs, and men were presently seen straggling on the ground in one undistinguishable mess, whilst such as had the use of their legs were making their escape with no less haste than alarm. Her majesty and her courtiers got themselves to a place of safety with much more speed than dignity; but in a few minutes, the uproar ceas'd, Brain was recaptur'd, and the dogs severally secured. It may readily be believe there was no more bear-baiting before her highness that day.

Henslowe saw his beasts depart to their habitations with their attendants, and then, putting on his jerkin, accompanied his son Allen to look for his expected guests. Much they discoursed by the way on the state of their affairs—now dilating on their doings at the Fortune, and now at Paris Garden; and, from what passed betwixt them, a goodly lesson might have been learned of the relative value of interludes and bear-baiting; of play-boys and play-writers, and bulls, bears, and dogs of divers kinds and qualities. Apparently well satisfied with these matters, as far as they were concerned with them, they at last arrived at a small way-side inn, near the Pimlico fields, as you go to Chelsea, much frequented by honest citizens with a taste for the country, and a proper enjoyment for cards and cream, hot-cakes, and a game at bowls. Instead of going through the house, they entered at an open gate, which led them through a shady avenue into a sort of garden, having bowers all round for the accommodation of the company. Here was a swing, and several other rustic pleasures, and beyond was a smooth bowling-green, in great repute for the neatness with which it was kept.

Old Henslowe and his son became aware as they approached, of some persons being in hot and violent dispute. People were seen leaving their favorite bowers, some with alarm, and some with curiosity. The swing was deserted; the climbing-pole, the skittles, and the bats for the shooters completely neglected; and all were hastening to look into the cause of the huge uproar which was existing in the bowling-green. Among a throng of persons, some of whom affected a display of greater bravery than was usual amongst the regular frequenters of "The Shepherd and Shepherdess," whose sharp speeches and ready answers had more than once drawn attention to them from the more quiet part of the company, there was seen, more prominently than all others, a sturdy, broad-faced, stout-made man, not ill apparelled, yet seeming to be careless of such things, his features inflamed with passion, and both by voice and gesture showing, as plainly as such things could, that he was in a very monstrous, tearing humor with some one. Around and about him were two or three of his companions, evidently striving all they could to pacify him, most prominent among whom was one who, by his appearance, was a person of worship, though this arose as much from his having so godly a presence as from wearing handsome garments.

A little in the rear of these was another group, surrounding a man of a middle height, yet of a well-knit frame, whose face was pale with passion. It might be seen, from his manner and language, that he was quite as violent as the other, and that he paid as little attention to the representations of his companions in their endeavors to restore him to good humor. An indifferent spectator could easily have ascertained, from what fell from these different persons, that there had been a violent quarrel during a game at bowls betwixt two of a party of players who had met together at "The Shepherd and Shepherdess" for the enjoyment of those innocent pleasures the place afforded. The two, it appeared, were Benjamin Jonson and Gabriel Spencer, both of "The Fortune;" the former, besides, being a writer of plays of singular merit, as witness his admirable "Every Man in his Humor." Both were of marvellous hasty tempers, and exceedingly intolerant of the slightest opposition. After taunting each other with terrible provoking words, they got so inflamed, that they were for running each other through where they stood; but they were separated by some of their more peaceable companions, and made to put by their rapiers ere they had done any

mischief—yet not without the giving and receiving of a challenge to settle their quarrel the next day in Hoxton Fields. It was hoped, by those who strove most to reconcile them—particularly the person just spoken of, who was addressed sometimes as W. I., and sometimes as Master Shakspeare—that the matter in dispute might be adjusted without any recourse to weapons; and they labored assiduously with that object in view.

It was in this stage of the proceedings that old Henslowe and his son-in-law approached them. The latter thought it wisest to take no notice of the dispute; and, therefore, in a cheerful manner, he accosted them all and severally, which behavior of his was immediately resented by the greater part with every sign of welcome and good humor, for the purpose of calling off the attention of the disputants from their quarrel; and they even put aside their squabble, and replied to their salutations in something like a friendly spirit. An invitation was shortly after proffered to them by Edward Allen, which was as heartily received as given, and in a presenty there was such a vast expenditure amongst them of harmless frolick and pleasure, that it appeared to the peaceful Allen, his mony had been completely restored. He was, however, about the only one in the company under that impression, which doubtless arose from his entire ignorance of the bitter, taunting speeches that had passed betwixt Ben Jonson and Gabriel Spencer, which, it was well known, from their turbulent dispositions, neither would overlook.

Nevertheless, in the full belief that the quarrel was a trifling one, which must, of course, be entirely forgotten whilst they were enjoying themselves under his roof, he readily joined in the mirth that was going on around him, as they strolled towards Westminster, for the purpose of taking boats to Southwark. They engaged two boats; and it was so managed, that Gabriel should proceed in one, and Ben in the other, and there were about either, one or two judicious friends who tried to reconcile them. It did not appear they had much success, for both parties continued in the same dogged humor—without doubt entertaining feelings against each other not readily to be removed.

They all arrived, without further adventure, at Edward Allen's house in the liberty of the Clink, and met with the most friendly of welcomes from the good dame, who, in her extreme pleasure at seeing of her father, seemed determined to be pleased even with those she least liked to see. She had got two or three good gossips of her acquaint-

ance of her own sex to meet her husband's company, and had greatly excited their expectations by anticipating the monstrous satisfaction they were to find in the society of some of her expected guests, particularly dilating on the numerous sweet qualities of her husband's fast friend, Master William Shakspeare, of "The Globe," whom she made no disguise in averring she liked with a man honest woman's partiality. At the entrance of her husband with his company, she singled out Master Shakspeare, and made him known to these her friends with such warmth of gratification, as no doubt would have rendered somewhat uneasy a husband less satisfied with his wife's worthiness of nature, or his friend's honorableness of mind, than the well-contented Ned Allen.

The reception, and the efforts they were obliged to make to renew an acquaintance or to establish one with the fair companions of their fair hostess, for awhile took off the attention of the associates of Ben Jonson and Gabriel Spencer; and the securing of their places at dinner, the satisfying of their several appetites, and the attentions they thought it necessary to pay to their female fellow-guests, prevented them for some time noticing their behavior. Nevertheless, some time before the meal was finished, they could not help regarding, with very considerable alarm, the exceeding strangeness of their conduct. Gabriel sat pale and stately, with a sinister, restless look glancing from his grey eyes. He was wont to be a good feeder and a loud talker, but all marvelled to see he ate little and talked less: Ben, with his broad, red face, sat over against him, looking all the less pleasant for the gloomy frown which seemed to sit on it immovably. He had never been wont to neglect either his meat or his liquor; but now he had not a maid's appetite in courting time; nevertheless, he neglected not the good wine, of which there was abundance, but poured it down as though he was laboring under a thirst that could not be quenched, or made his throat a funnel for the purpose of noting how quickly good liquor would run down it. The excellent housewife had put forth all her skill in the making of dainty dishes to entertain her husband's guests, as she believed they deserved; and the result was a banquet that should have pleased the most critical.

There certainly was no lack of commendation from the well-pleased guests. Even the dame's good gossips eat and praised, and praised again, as though desirous of doing the fullest justice to their entertainment. And well were they qualified for this, for they were no flaunting madams too proud

and ignorant to trouble themselves about domestic matters. They were simple, honest, city dames, of excellent reputation, than whom none knew better the proper ordering of a house, and all that sheweth the notable true housewife, in the best and kindliest fashion. Dame Allen, in her duty of a good hostess, was diligent in seeing that all fared well, and were well satisfied with their fare. Whilst engaged in this office, she was struck with the uneasy air and strange, unsocial manner of the quarrellers; but, as neither of them were of her esteemed acquaintance, she contented herself with an occasional pressing to partake of her dainties, and then directed her attention to such as she regarded with more esteem. Still, ever and anon, she glanced at the two with a curious inquietude, and busied her mind with marvelling what it was that made them appear so ill at ease, in the midst of such general contentation.

At last the meal was over, the table cleared, and again spread with tankards, and glasses, and wine, and sack, and cakes, and confits, and the like after-dinner eates; and every one seemed to be inclined to talk to his neighbor; some ventured upon a jest, and all looked to be inclined for pleasantry and good fellowship after the bias of their several humors. Old Henslowe talked of the notable bulls and bears he had seen in his day, and entered into some spirited accounts of the dogs they had been matched with. His daughter chimed in with anecdotes of the savagest of these animals, speaking of their fiercest encounters as familiarly as might another of her sex of the sportiveness of kittens. Her worthy husband, as was his wont, divided his discourse so much between quadrupeds and bipeds, that there was no knowing, for certain, which had the advantage of his commendations. Others spoke of news from court and gossip concerning the ill-repute into which, it was said, the Earl of Essex had fallen with the queen. Shakspeare was dividing many gentle courtesies and compliments amongst his fair hostess and her fair friends, as it seemed, infinitely to their contentation. Each appeared to have something to engibe himself withal, and some means of affording entertainment to himself and his neighbors.

Yet, of the company, there must be excepted two, for Gabriel Spencer still continued his sullen reserve, and Benjamin Jonson kept up his wild manner and frequent recourse to the tankard; in addition to which he began, in a fierce, taunting manner, to make remarks which, though riddles to most

of the guests, were easily seen by Gabriel, and a few others, to be levelled at him. The flashing eyes and increasing paleness of the latter warned the observant that there would be mischief anon, if they had not the wit to ward it off; and so they presently took measures that should direct attention elsewhere. They chose to be pressing on their host for a taste of his skill on the lute, which, after some backwardness, he was induced to afford; and, of a surety, he well earned the praises so liberally bestowed on his admirable handling his instrument. Then was enjoyed the sweet throat of Will Byrd; and his exquisite ballad was scarcely ended when Humphrey Jeffes was enforced to show the goodly quality of his violdi-Gamba. John Shanke's ready jest was equally at their bidding; and Tom Downton's tricks of conjuring were as little called for in vain. Ere the last of these marvels had exhausted the astonishment of the company, the three-part song of Ned Colbrand, Francis Grace, and Samuel Rowley, was heard in all its grateful harmony.

The thoughtful few who so judiciously sought to render ineffective the evil humors of their unfriendly companions, noticed, not without much alarm, that neither the tasteful playing on the lute, the exquisite ballad, the famous performance on the viol, jest, conjuring, or three-part song, had any effect on the angry and unsocial spirits who sat amongst them; and they began to experience a creeping dread, that chilled their own efforts to keep the rest sufficiently amused. Of these, Master Shakspeare had been all along the most active. He had seen that mischief was brewing under the clondy brows of his two angry associates, and sought all means at his disposal to bring them into pleasanter and more commendable feelings; but the evident uselessness of his labors began to be painfully conspicuous, for, misliking the strange looks and behavior of Ben Jonson and Gabriel Spencer, Dame Allen and her gossips had, one after another, stolen out of the chamber. The newsmongers sat silent, gazing with no small share of anxiousness, at the singular bearing and behavior of their turbulent friends. The singers forgot their voices, and the musicians their instruments; the jester had ceased attempting to raise a laugh at his quirks and quiddities, and the conjurer seemed to have taken an entire leave of his art—so wrought upon were they all with the strangeness of the conduct of their fellow-guests. Old Henslowe and his son-in-law appeared to be the only persons who knew not the feelings that were nourished by their implacable friends;

and they were so intent upon a discussion respecting the best age at which bears should be first brought to the games, as to have no thought or care for anything else.

Shakspeare, who had omitted nothing that might reconcile the hostile parties, or make them forget their quarrel, saw, with alarm, the offensive conduct of the now half-intoxicated Ben Jonson ; and at last ventured, in an under-tone, to make an impressive remonstrance to him. At this, the other, striking his fist on the table, loudly exclaimed, with a contemptuous look and voice, " Let him go hang ! Who cares for such a white-livered hound ? " The words were scarce out of his mouth, when Gabriel started up, his long pent-up passion no longer to be restrained, and, catching in his hand a heavy tankard that stood before him, he sent it, with so true an aim, at the head of the insulter, that it knocked him off his stool. A violent scene followed, every one springing to his legs in confusion, all asking questions, or making comments, and crowding round either the prostrate player or his adversary. Henslowe and his son-in-law seemed as greatly astonished as though all their bears, bulls, and dogs, had joined in general fight ; and the rest, if their astonishment was less, their anxiety was equally painful.

At the first outcry, Dame Allen and some of her gossips had rushed to the door, in as hugh a fear as women are wont to fall into on such occasions, to learn the nature of the disturbance ; and their exclamations, as may well be believed, did not tend, in any manner, to lessen the uproar and confusion. Poor Dame Allen ! terrible was her disappointment at the result of an entertainment, to enjoy the superior attractions of which she had invited so many estimable persons of her own sex ; and it was not till the worthiest of her guests, in her thinking, had had come to assure her that there was no cause to be under any alarm, for his friend had only been stunned, and was in a fair way of perfect recovery, that she grew to be in a more tranquil state.

Whilst some of the company were busy raising the fallen man, a few assembled about the other, and, partly by persuasion, partly by force, got him out of the room, and thence into the street. On coming to himself, Ben was monstrous furious, and at first could not be pacified in any manner, when he found his adversary had gone away ; but in the end he became less violent, and finally took his leave of his host as though he thought no more of the matter. At this all the company went their several ways, with an abundance of friendly good

wishes from their kind and cheerful entertainers. They, in the simplicity of their hearts, fancied that the quarrel would go no farther ; but in that they were in as great error as ever they were in all their days.

Early on the morrow, two men were seen walking rapidly together in the direction of Hoxton Fields. It was a fair morning in September, with a fine cool air, and the hedges were in full foliage, showing a rare crop of berries, and a no less pleasant stock of the latest flowers of the season ; and the herds, which stood in groups, hither and thither, were breaking their fast with what looked to be a most absolute enjoyment of their meal. Flocks of sparrows and finches were flitting from spray to spray, and numerous bands of larks were whirling over the open pastures. The distant report of a gun from the stubbles, which were plainly discernible in the landscape, showed that the sportsman was abroad, and busy at his vocation. The two men walked on at a brisk pace, as hath been said, the one looking exceedingly fierce and sullen, the other wearing a melancholy expression, with a visible tinge of uneasiness.

" I think, Ben," exclaimed the first, in a serious tone of voice, " it would be as well, your honor well cared for, to settle this unhappy dispute, betwixt you and Gabriel, without the shedding of blood."

" Tush, Will ; dost take me for a craven !" exclaimed the other, fiercely. " Am I to be knocked o' the pate by every scurvy knave that lists, and care for nought but to patch up my quarrel ! Zounds ! shall I, who, as it were, have served apprenticeship to the profession of arms, and that, too, with some small credit to myself and respect of mine enemies, shall I be a mark for so worthless, contemptible a fellow as this Gabriel Spencer ; to be flung at when it suited his humor, and, when I have had my brains nigh upon knocked out, present my service to him with his morning dranght ! Nay, I'll put my tongue in pawn to the first cur who seeketh a breakfast, ere it shall give its assent to anything so odious."

" I admit that the blow is an affront not to be endured," observed the other, whom the understanding reader will have no difficulty in discovering to be Master Shakspeare. " But surely he had exceeding provocation."

" Provocation be hanged !" sharply answered his friend, who was no other than Benjamin Jonson. " Was it like, after what had passed that I could sit tamely by

and see so vile a fellow making mouths at me, like a sick ape after physic ! Fore George, I had a month's mind to cudgel him as he sat. I tell thee, Will," added he, in a decided tone, "the knave hath crossed me often. I like not his humors. I am earnest in my quarrel, and with the help of my good rapier, which hath done me yeoman's service before now, I will bring it to a proper ending."

Master Shakspeare knew Ben too well to expect any approach being made to the amicable settling of this difference in his present mood ; therefore, he wisely held his speech, and the two continued to walk on in silence till they turned the end of the lane, which bordered on the fields to which they were proceeding. As they were advancing along the path that leads across one of the larger fields, they became aware of two persons waiting under a clump of trees, down in one of the corners of it, for whom they made. They were so intent on their discourse, that they did not discover the approach of Ben and his friend, till they came close upon them, and overheard the following dialogue.

" Of a trath, Captain Swashbuckler, you speak monstrous temptingly of your rapier."

" A right Toledo, as I live, worthy Master Spencer. But that I have confidence in your discretion, I would not have told you the name of the great grande of whom I had it."

" The Duke de Medina Sidonia, I think you said, to whom it had been presented by the King of Spain."

" And in consequence of my pressing necessities, and of my exceeding friendship for you, I reduce my demand of forty crowns, which is not a quarter of its right estimate, to five, which I would not of any one else take for the loan of it."

" I am bound to you, Captain Swashbuckler, for your consideration, and for standing my friend in this quarrel ; and I willingly pay you the sun you require."

" Thanks, worthy sir ; but concerning of this little matter of dispute betwixt you and that hectoring bricklyer, Benjamin Jonson, be you under no manner of concern as to its issue. Remember you my lessons—forget not your punto reverso—of all things bear in mind the secret thrust I took such pains to inform you of—and you shall have his weapon at your command and his life at your disposal, ere you have exchanged half a score of passes with him. I remember me, as well as if it was but yesterday, when I taught the noble Earl of Leicester this same matchless trick of fence ; and I

know not how many of his enemies he overthrew by employing it in the duello with them. But, by the god of war, here come the very men we look for!"

Saying this, Captain Swashbuckler advanced, and, taking off his hat with the easy assurance of a east captain, saluted the persons who approached him. His broad, bronzed face was not made a whit handsoemer for the patch over his eye, and his ungainly shape was not more prepossessing than his aspect. He was dressed in a faded suit of cinnamon, with a goodly ruff, wore his soiled beaver with the air of a commander, and strode in a pair of worn-out buff shoes, with crumpled roses, as though there could not be so great a man in the world.

After salutation and mutual introductions, Master Shakspeare and he stood a little apart to arrange the business of the meeting. It was the earnest desire of the former to bring things to an amicable settlement, but the other must needs show himself to be a man of war, and talked so overpoweringly of the affront his principal had received, and entered so learnedly into the proper proceedings of the duello in such cases, that, with a sad heart, Master Shakspeare found he could not prevent the fight both parties were so bent upon.

It chaffred, however, that previous to the combatants being set against each other, on the seconds measuring their rapiers, " the right Toledo," which Captain Swashbuckler had sold his friend, was found to be several inches longer in the blade than the sword of Ben Jonson. Master Shakspeare lustily protested against such a weapon being used, and was in hope this inequality would put an end to the combat ; but Ben insisted that his adversary should have his own weapon, which he strongly commended as having befriended him on many a pinch, and he would take that worn by his friend, Will Shakspeare, which was of the same length. The latter strove to prevent this, but all his objections were overruled ; and at last Ben Jonson and Gabriel Spencer found themselves opposite each other with the naked blades, as the former had ruled, crossed in front of them.

Captain Swashbuckler appeared even less pleased with this arrangement than Master Shakspeare, but they both drew a little off from the combatants, to watch and wait the issue of the fight. Ben Jonson looked determinedly, yet with the quiet steady glance of an old swordsman ; and Gabriel Spencer, though he was somewhat disconcerted at the disappointment he had to endure in

being deprived of the advantages he might have derived from *s*o *c*o*ñ*te*ñ* a weapon as that which had had the honor of being conferred by the King of Spain on so distinguished a grandee as the Duke de Medina Sidonia, fit such confidence in the lessons he had received from a master of fence so well known at Paul's as Captain Swash-buckler, as to be perfectly free from apprehension for himself. But, most unfortunately for him, it so chanced that, in the very beginning of the duel, after a few passes only, and before he thought of applying to the famous secret thrust that had so befriended the great Earl of Leicester, his own weapon was turned aside, and at the same moment the other passed through his body. Poor Gabriel ! he uttered but one groan, and fell dead at the feet of his adversary.

Master Shakspere was greatly shocked, but he saw at a glance no human aid could avail. Ben Jonson seemed no less distressed ; it was evident he was terribly moved, and he vowed very earnestly he would willingly give all he was worth in the world such a mischance had not happened. He called to Captain Swash-buckler to help to bear his friend out of the field, but the noble captain had thought it much better to bear himself out, as soon as he beheld the turn things had taken, and was no longer within hearing. He, however, did not forget to take with him the goodly rapier, which he had so lately sold at so poor a price, in the fullest conviction that its matchless character must be of much more advantage to a living teacher of fence than to a dead pupil.

With the assistance of some laboring men from an adjoining brick-field, the body of Gabriel Spencer was removed to a fitter resting-place ; and his death was so much spoken of, as soon as it became known, that Ben Jonson found it necessary to remove himself as far from the scene of the fatal quarrel as was possible for him.

CHAPTER IV.

Let me crave
Thy virtuous help to keep from grave
This poor mortal, that here lies
Waiting when the destinies
Will undo his thread of life.

THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS.

INTO a certain tenement that was in the village of Shottery, must we now introduce the courteous reader. Certes, this same

dwelling was none of the stateliest, yet had it very fair accommodations for those who dwelt therein, and an exceeding inviting appearance from the highway before it, when the twining woodbine which covered the porch, and clung round the casements, and about every part, up to the eaves, with infinite luxurianess, was in its fullest bloom—the more especial when there was a fair posy of freshest flowers standing in some convenient vessel on the window-sill, and through the open door there could be seen a glimpse of the fruit-trees in the garden, in fullest bloom, or with store of pippins and cherries on their pleasant boughs, while, before the door, two rosy-cheeked girls sat with an exceeding fair show of diligence—the one knitting of hose, and the other, evidently, scarce a year older, spinning at her wheel, ever and anon looking from her labors to regard or give some sage admonitions—marvellous for one of her tender years—to a laughing, shouting, lovely boy, twinned at a birth with her sister, who was romping and rioting with a young hound of a noble breed, at a little distance, the two rolling over each other on the grass with admirable good fellowship on both sides, and a huge outcry of mingled barking and shouting ; and presently the dog, breaking away from his companion, and standing at some little way off, uttering many a short joyful bark, and wagging of his tail very famously, watching the movements of his lovely playfellow, and bounding off again as the boy sought to lay hold of him, and repeating these antics till he graciously allowed himself to be caught.

Then broke out afresh the noisy play with so wild an uproar, that it would bring out the alarmed mother from her household-work, and thereupon she would rate the boy and the dog, for their blameableness in creating so horrid a din, and, more than all, rate the elder sister for having allowed it. Whereof the result would be, the dog would presently look as grave as dog ever looked when found at fault, and, spying of a beggar at the end of the village, would set off with a monstrous eagerness down the road to show his extreme watchfulness ; the boy would return to the task he had been conning, ere weariness made him fling it aside for choicer entertainment ; and the elder girl, after many loving words, endeavoring to impress on the truant the exceeding profitableness of book over play, would continue her spinning, and her discourse with her sister on divers matters seeming to be of the most absolute importance, which had been so rudely interrupted.

By the time the matron had left the door, the dog had returned to his accustomed place before the house. At first he put on an exceeding discreet behavior, only venturing to cast a wistful glance at his fellow culprit, when tired of scratching at his ears, biting at his tail, snapping at the flies that ventured in his neighborhood, or following any of those employments most in request among dogs of all degrees, when not inclined for sleep, food, or other occupation. For awhile the head, so rich in shining curls, of his playfellow, was not raised from his task ; but ere long it was slowly lifted up.

As soon as the child's eyes met those of his fast friend, the latter leit off what he was then about ; his tail was in motion on the instant ; at first slowly and softly, then beating of the ground with monstrous vigorous thumps, as he ventured on a subdued bark. Anon, some little encouragement covertly given by the boy, set him leaping around him, at a short distance, making it less and the bark louder as the other increased, the evidence he could not avoid showing of the pleasure with which his playmate's proceedings were regarded. It was rarely the temptation was long resisted. The task was again cast aside, and they were presently frolicking together with more noisy enjoyment than ever.

Such was the scene, with occasional trifling variations, that had every sunny morning for the last year or two, been presented to the ordinary wayfarer when passing through the quiet village of Shottery. Did it appear he was a stranger in these parts, and, struck by the singular beauty and intelligence of the children, must needs inquire to whom they belonged, he was sure to hear one of two monstrous different stories—perchance both.

One was, that the mother was the daughter of an honest yeoman, whose sons lived in the house higher up the road, where the family of the Hathaways had dwelt time out of mind, and that Anne, instead of marrying some person of substance and repute among her neighbors, as was expected of her, and as she might have done, had she so desired—there being no lack of such anxious to be connected with so worthy a man as John Hathaway—had taken up with a young fellow from Stratford (whose father was as poor as a church mouse), so wild in his courses that, after stealing of Sir Thomas Lucy's deer, beating his men, and numberless worse offences, he abandoned his wife and his three children, and joined the players in London, where he had since

been leading a horrible ungodly life, in all sorts of riotous ill-living—taking little note of his poor wife and sweet young family, save once in a way or so coming to see them.

Then, if the intelligencer were a woman, which was like enough, and a careless and unthrifty wife, which was not impossible, she would be monstrously indignant at the barbarousness of husbands, saying that, as far as she knew, one was not a whit better than another ; wives were to be slaves forsooth, and to be cast aside like old garments not fitting to be worn when the occasion served, while their dissatisfied partners did nought but find fault and give trouble.

Much more to the same purpose was like to follow, was her companion inclined to listen, but it most frequently happened she was brought back to the proper subject of inquiry, and then proceeded to communicate numberless interesting particulars relating to the persons whom she had before mentioned ; and the stranger, unless he sought other information, went away with the impression that of all the base, idle, careless, profligate husbands, unnatural fathers, and intolerable worthless varlets, one Will Shakespeare was the worst, out of all doubt.

But the other tale was of an exceeding different complexion, inasmuch as it described the said Will as being the son of a respectable Burgess of Stratford; some time since Alderman and High Bailiff of that town, a youth well esteemed of many for his singular fine talent in the writing of ballads and plays, who was inveigled into a marriage ere he was eighteen, by an artful cozening jade nigh upon old enough to be his mother, whose temper was of that intolerable sort he was forced to fly his native town, rather than endure any more of it, and seek his fortune in London, where his marvellous skill and learning so wrought upon the Queen's Highness, it was said she would have had him right willingly to have been her husband, had he not had already a wife of his own. Nevertheless, this stood so little in the way of his advancement that his fortune was made presently by her Highness, who would scarce let him out of her sight, and it was with much ado he could escape from her to attend to the wants of his young family, who with their mother he maintained with so liberal an exhibition, taking for her the house in which she then dwelt, and filling it with comforts such as no woman of her condition had experienced, that she was envied of all the wives in the village.

Should the teller of this tale be a man

as is not unlikely, and had a thriftless idle baggage, with a godly spice of the shrew in her, for a wife, which many men have had before now, he will at this point of his discourse speak terrible bitter things of the wretchedness of husbands that have such vile jades for to be their helpmates, and if the stranger check him not, it is like he will be mons rous moving upon his own grievance in this particular, till he do.

He will then straightway be ready to take his oath on it, so loving a husband and tender a father as Master Shakspeare never lived in this world; that, despite his dame's crabbedness, artfulness, and folly, he had tried all things to induce her to be a good wife to him; and that on his children he so doated, he lavished his whole gains in the bringing of them up tenderly. The boy in especial he had such proud hopes of, it was said he had writ a play wherein he was made to be no less a person than the Prince of Denmark. Thereupon the stranger would quit the place in the opinion that the said Master Shakspeare was made up of every wonderfuller excellence, and was so fortunate withal, sive in the matter of his wife, that he could not but envy him his gifts.

Whereabouts lyeth the truth betwixt these contrary statements, the courteous reader will doubtless be able in some sort to determine.

It hath been discovered by some prying, impertinent jackanapes or another, that the bright source of all that we have of splendor, clearness, and excellence in things visible, hath on it divers unsightly spots. If that face which is of such wondrous brilliance no gaze can be fixed on it for long and not blinded, be so disfigured, it is utter foolishness to expect the fairest and perfectest thing in nature to be free of speck or flaw.

The sun throweth out his golden beams with so unmeasured a prodigality that none save such poor inquisitorial critical knaves, who, if allowed to see a hair's breadth beyond their noses, must do so only to find fault with what most helpeth them in the use of their sight, would be so horribly ungrateful as to point out any small defect in him visible only after intolerable prying and searching, quite regardless of the prodigious heap of benefit all derive at his hands.

Therefore, in portraying of certain spots in this our intellectual sun, or rather such as do so appear when viewed in ignorance of the circumstances which produced them, the which becometh proper and necessary for the full understanding of the subject—it

behoveth all who read, to be mindful of the incalculable advantages placed at our disposal by the infinite generousness of his nature, and if there should be any grievous error mixed up with such bountiful store of good, let us straightway regard with a proper humility the knowledge that the sweetest, gentlest, noblest of God's creatures could not escape the debasing touch of evil.

Peradventure, this blemish, if any there be, shall b^e none so great—at least it must needs leave good warrant for the exercise of our charity.

In the blooming daughter of the honest yeoman of Shottery, of a surety, there was no lack of womanly tenderness. Yet so frequently did her womanly vanity under evil counsel get the better of her better qualities, it was rarely the latter were allowed their natural influence.

To one of so sensitive a sort, as he to whom the church had given her, whose aspirations pointed to such fine issues, and whose affections could embrace only what was most choice, such intractableness as she exhibuted must needs have produced in him a sense of intolerable discomfort.

In the very flush of youth, possessed of all those personal gifts that do most attract a loving woman's eye, and having such prodigal graces of mind and heart withal, as woman never yet resisted, it is like enough his nature was as ready to meet the love he had sought so earnestly with such little profit, as were the natures of all such fond and loveable creatures with whom he chanced to associate, eager to assist him to its attainment.

Directly it chanced he had the means at his commandment, his thoughts turned towards a suitable provision for his wife and young family. He had the pleasant cottage in which they had since dwelt at Shottery taken for them, and furnished with all things useful and proper in abundance, and their several wants were so fully considered, no family in the village were so well cared for.

He never allowed a year to pass without paying them a visit, at which times, as may well be imagined, he was not like to come empty-handed. Indeed, so prodigal was he in the giving of such things as children most desire, and so many other ways had he of winning their young hearts, his coming was looked for by them all with monstrous eagerness; but not more anxious were they for his return, than was he to be amongst them, for so loving a father was he, it mattered not what pleasures and honors awaited him among his many excellent noble patrons and friends, when the time approached

for his customary visit, he was as impatient to be on the road, as ever was lover to meet his mistress.

That he loved them all was most manifest; but of his three children, there was one whom he loved with so infinite and absolute a devotedness, it moved every heart that saw it. This was his only son Hamnet. The helpless infant, the tottering child, and the romping boy, were regarded by him, as the fond father year after year saw him take on himself these several characters, with an intensity of interest, such as none but a doting parent can have any thought of. His affection became a passion—the powerfulest impulse of his existence. His thoughts seemed to tend in one direction with a constancy that was rivalled only by the ever-steady compass.

Fame, wealth, friends, and all the other covetable enjoyments of life he sought for only as a means of elevating this lovely boy into a manhood that might find its place among the proudest of the land, and insure for many generations living evidences, readily obtaining high fortune and distinction, that the name of Shakspeare was not of a perishable sort.

Oft and oft would his musings take unto themselves shapes whereof the purport was his son's greatness in some one way or another; and he would further delight his humor by imagining such glorious scenes whereof this most precious boy was the chief feature, as one of such wondrous qualities of heart and mind could alone conceive.

As he grew up, so grew the love with which he was regarded by his proud, affectionate, and exceeding sanguine father. His wants were ministered to with a hand that left no room for an unsatisfied desire of any sort to have a moment's existence. The anxious parent, when he last parted from him, not only charged divers his zealous friends at Stratford and thereabouts, to watch over his safety and happiness, as was his wont on such occasions, but provided that his education should be carried on with all possible advantages, having secured as an instructor for him that excellent ripe scholar, the learned Vicar of Stratford, Master Richard Bifield.

Hamnet, now—no longer the romping child who loved far better than aught else in the world beside a tumble in the grass with Talbot, who had been his faithful friend and ready playmate from earliest infancy—was a thin tall boy, in his thirteenth year, who, as regularly as any clock in the parish, might be met on the road to Stratford every

morning and afternoon with his satchel strapped over his jerkin, intently coming of a book that was in his hand, halting not, nor turning to the right or left, let there be what attraction for one of his age there might, but proceeding direct to the vicarage, there to say his daily tasks to Master Bifield. And on his return home—it was not as other boys would, when let loose from school, in disorderly rioting—and, like enough, any mischief that looked easiest to do, but walking the same serious pace, and as earnestly studying his book as on his leaving home. Even when, on approaching the village, his old favorite came bounding towards him with his well-remembered joyful bark, the only recognition he had of the studious boy was an affectionate pat or two from his disengaged hand, as the dog leaped on him, and, without moving his gaze from the page, he would continue his walk to his mother's door, his hand resting on his four-footed friend, who now walked sedately at his side, ever and anon casting a glance at the pale face of his once rosy playfellow, and giving a low whine, that seemed to express a very monstrous concern at the change that had taken place in him.

The amusements to which his sisters invited him, with abundance of sweet entreaties and caresses, and the sharp dissatisfaction of his mother, at ever finding him poring over some book or another, were as little efficacious in making any alteration in his excessive studiousness. The commendation he had of his excellent instructor, for his diligence and forwardness in all manner of learning, and the exceeding pleasure as Master Bifield told him frequently, it would be to his loving father to find him so good a scholar, made him so exert himself to advance rapidly in his studies, that, morning, noon, and night, he seemed intent on nothing but the learning of everything he could be set at.

Proud was the master of such a pupil. In truth, he was too proud of him to be sufficiently discreet. He had been a scholar all his life long—poor in this world's gear, but rich in virtue, learning, and all good gifts; and so conspicuous were his merits, that, when the former schoolmaster was summarily sent from an office he had too long disgraced, such recommendation of his fine parts was made to the patron of the vicarage, as caused that very estimable, pious gentleman to bestow it on him, to the great and lasting profit of the parishioners.

Long and severe study had made sad inroads in his health, ere he commenced his new duties; and the heavy labors he set

himself, to undo the many mischiefs caused by the disreputable acts of his predecessor, wrought on his constitution still farther evil. He disregarded severity of weather, and all other inconveniences whatsoever, in the doing of the various pious offices he might at any time or season be called upon to perform. This, in time, reduced him to a mere skeleton in appearance; and, though yet in the prime of life, so feeble in body was he, he was scarce ever able to do more than the least laborious of his customary duties. As he complained not to any one, and was ever of a cheerful disposition, none took him to be in so bad a case as he was; but the sunken cheek and eyes, emaciated frame, and constant teasing cough, were signs that ought not to have been disregarded.

At last he got so much worse, he was fain to take to his bed. Nevertheless, such was his love for Hamnet, he would have him say his tasks at his bedside with the young scholar's accustomed regularity, and command him, and set him further lessons, and discourse with him on all matters wherein he lacked intelligence, though the sick man was scarce able to move a limb, or use his voice above a whisper. Surely such a sight hath rarely been seen as presented itself every morning and afternoon in the vicar's antique chamber.

Perchance, on his first entering, the boy would have with him some choice fruit of his own plucking, or dainty posie of his own gathering, or some other choice thing or another to please the sick man's eye or palate, and with these in his hand he would first dutifully present them to his master, not forgetting the while to ask earnestly whether he was mending; and then, having received all proper thanks and the necessary reply, he would put the flowers, or whatever it might be, where he thought his master would be best pleased to have them, and then take his accustomed place and beg n his proper task. In sooth, it then became a scene of no ordinary interest.

There was the zealous master, pale as any ghost, lying supported by pillows, one shrunken arm and bony hand resting on the coverlet, his eyes brightening as he noticed the exceeding aptness of his diligent scholar, who, with visage having but little more warrant of health in it, stood by the sombre tapestry at the bed's head, affectionately and reverently regarding his excellent instructor, as he repeated without a fault the various lessons he had been tasked with. This done, Hamnet would seek to do the sick man all manner of loving offices, which the other took as though he would have them

done by none other than he; and, when there was nothing left to do, the scholar looked as loth to go as was the master to have him depart. But at last came an affectionate fear, expressed by the sick man, that the boy's mother would needs be made more anxious for his safety than was right; he should make her, delayed he his departure any longer; and, with heartfelt blessings on the one side, and as fervent prayers on the other, the two would separate for that day.

This went on for some weeks, Master Bitield making some small progress towards recovery, though still too feeble to leave his chamber, when it chanced that one morning, at the usual hour, marvellous as it was, the punctual scholar made not his appearance. The worthy vicar at first thought he might have been stayed by his mother; then he fancied he had gone with his sisters to some distance, and had not got back in time to get to the vicarage; and then made for him some other excuse equally reasonable. But still he came not.

Hour after hour passed by, to the prodigious surprise of the good priest, and almost to the exhausting of a very plentiful stock of reasons for Hamnet's absence, and yet the boy was no nearer his place by his master's bedside than at first. Thus proceeded the day—a most uneasy one to Master Bitield, and it was succeeded by as restless a night.

The morning found him not less sanguine of the coming of his beloved scholar than he had been the day previous; but, when the school-hour arrived, and Hamnet came not, his master became exceeding troubled, and at once despatched his attaché, but somewhat too querulous, domestic to Shottery, to inquire the cause of the boy's extraordinary absence.

Master Bitield had been lying in his bed, monstrously troubled in his thoughts concerning the absence of his diligent and affectionate young scholar, waiting with prodigious anxiety the return of Esther, when he heard a step he knew to be hers; but, to his huge disappointment, the lighter and more welcome sound of Hamnet's footsteps, did not accompany it. Presently the door of his chamber opened, and there entered thereat the tall, gaunt figure of Esther, clad with her usual extreme neatness, and wearing a visage of more than ordinary seriousness and melancholy concern.

As soon as the vicar caught sight of her, he raised himself up a bit, with a look of exceeding alarm. "Hast seen him? Why doth he not come? Doth aught ail the boy?"

Prythee sit down and rest thyself, good Esther; after thy walk; and let me know, as speedily as thou canst, what keeps Hamnet from the vicarage. When will he come? Hath he his lesson ready? I trust he will be here anon."

Esther did not sit. She saw something in the arrangement of the things nighest her master she liked not. She busied herself awhile in putting them more conveniently, and of all the questions asked of her, she replied but to the last, and that was with a shaking of the head, that looked of such bad import to the sick man, he seemed struck with a sudden fear.

"Nay, I trust in God's love no ill hath happened to him!" cried he, with all the fervor of the excellent, proper Christian he was; but seeing that his messenger continued her employment as though she would delay uttering what she liked not to say, and that her aspect took on it a more painful shade of seriousness, he caught her by the arm, and added, in the most moving accents ever heard: "I pr'ythee, good Esther, tell me what aileth the boy? Some slight thing or another of which he shall be well presently? I may expect his coming a week hence at the farthest?"

This elicited not the reply he wished, for Esther was too moved to commence her task as an intelligencer. The anxiety of the sick man mounted to an agony, and, with features blanched with affright, he gasped out "Esther, Esther! pr'ythee tell me not that sweet boy is dead!"

"Nay, master, it hath not come to that yet," replied she, in a tone she intended should be consolatory. "But," she added, thinking, now it had come to this push, it were better the truth should be known at once, "an if I know aught of such matters, the poor boy's days are numbered in this world. God help him!"

She then proceeded to state how evident to every one's observation the young scholar's health had been rapidly sinking under his too great study, and that, after getting wet to the skin in a sudden rain, on returning home, he sat in his damp things studying his morrow's lesson, till he was taken with a terrible shivering fit. He was put to bed, but in the morning he was in so bad a state, the apothecary was sent for from Stratford, who pronounced him to be in the most imminent danger, since when he had been getting worse every hour, and, to all appearance, could not live many days.

"This is all that is to be got of poring over books," added Esther, emphatically. "And this, Master, hath brought you to a

bed of sickness, and hath been this many a year wearing out your life by inches, as I have warned you so oft. But, alack! alack! my painstaking hath been to such small profit, that yon have not only been destroying of yourself with such pestilent things, but have allowed this poor boy, under your own eyes, to waste his sweet young life away, after the same horrible fashion."

Hitherto the sick man had kept staring at his companion, too bewildered at the sudden blow to have the use of any sense save that of hearing. But, as she finished her speech, the truth of what she had stated flashed upon his mind, and the enormity of the mischief he had done presented itself to him so overpoweringly, that he, with a sharp cry, clasped his hands together and sunk in a swoon on the bed.

Esther flew to him on the instant, and with the tender interest of a mother administered such remedies as she knew were of most efficacy in such cases. As soon as he recovered his senses, he seemed to have a strength he had not known a long time, and called for his apparel. In vain his faithful attendant attempted to dissuade him from his intention, but he would attend to no suggestions or apprehensions. Dressing himself as quickly as he might, talking the while as though to himself, now bitterly condemning his own negligence of Hamnet's health, and then breaking out into the fondest praises of his promising scholarship, he took his staff in his hand, left his chamber, walked out of the vicarage with a step he had not known any so firm these ten years, and proceeded the directest way to the cottage at Shottery.

CHAPTER V.

If thou be scorn'd,

Disdaine it not: for preachers grave
Are still dispis'd, by faces hornde,

When they for better manners crave.
That hap, which fails on men divine,
If thou feele, doe not repine.

A GLASSE TO VIEW THE PRIDE OF VAIN-GLORIOUS WOMEN.

"A FEW words, John, and we must needs part. Heaven only knoweth whether it may be our fortune to meet again; but, however it shall chance, I am fully persuaded—I thank God very heartily for an assurance so comfortable to a mother—you will do no discredit to your bringing up. In sooth, you are a notable good youth, and seem like enough to keep your honored fa-

ther's name—blessed be his memory ! in fair repute as long as it shall be in your keeping."

"I trust so, good mother. I will do all that I needs can that you shall have not one minute's discomfort from my behavior."

"I doubt it not, my dear boy. In sooth, the knowledge of your well-disposedness is my great solace and contention in this trying hoar. I have provided you, without sparing cost or care, with such learning as you had the greatest liking for ; and you, having made choice, of your own free will, of the calling or profession of medicine—as excellent proper choice as could have been made—I have, as is already known to you, entered into such arrangements with one of the noblest London physicians, for your sojourning with him until you have completed your necessary studies in the treating of diseases, in the nature of simples and the like—for the which I think it but right I should tell you, I have taxed my means to the utmost, that you may use whatsoever diligence you have, they be not rendered unprofitable."

"That will I, rest assured. It would be a villanous ill return, methinks, for your exquisite sweet goolessness to me at all times, were I to be amiss in any thing."

"You know not what temptations may assail you in that great city whereto you are going—the which, I grieve to say, hath the horriblest bad character ever heard—for you have been brought up so homely, in these retired parts, no bruit of such could have reached you."

"I' faith, it mattereth not, sweet mother. You have taught me—I give you my very heartiest thanks for it—to know good from evil, to follow the one and eschew the other; and that will suffice, let me go where I will."

"I hope and trust, with all my heart and spirit, it may."

Thus spoke mother and son on the eve of a parting that seemed like to be of some duration ; and, after entering more into particulars in the way of cautions, the anxious parent allowed her son to receive her last caress and her blessing ; and, in company with a steady, middle-aged, serving-man, that had, in better times, lived at livery at his father's board the best part of his life, he was allowed to go his way.

Simon Stockfish had managed to get the loan of two steeds for their journey ; one for his young master, and the other for his own riding. He had done all that he could to make them worthy of the occasion, but with exceeding small profit, for Dapple and

Jack were two as worthless and misshapen brutes as were ever rode. Dapple—the one his master chose, was an iron-gray, as ancient a piece of horseflesh as you shall see any day, rising nigh upon sixteen hands, and so bony withal, the poor youth looked to be striding a tombstone ; and his head was so long and narrow, his ribs so prominent, such a goose-rump had he, and his tail was so short and stiff, for it was nothing but a stump with two or three hairs, it may well be imagined the horseman was not envied of other equestrians.

Simon followed, on Jack, a little, black, stiff-necked, rough and ragged cart-horse's colt, with long mane and tail, pretty well off for flesh, but so heavy and unwieldy withal, that when he trotted—which seemed his only quick pace, and one not easily to get him into—his hoofs clattered on the ground like monstrous hammers on an anvil. As Simon was a sturdy knave, whose belt encompassed a fair rotundity of body, his weight was not like to make his steed's paces any the lighter, added to which, he carried behind him his master's wardrobe, at his holsters a brace of leavy pistolets, and at his side a formidable rapier ; but the jolting he got, and the unseemliness of the animal he bestrode, seemed not to inconvenience him in any manner.

He retained an immovable visage of such dignity as he thought best became one who was entrusted with the guardianship of his young master, and riding at a respectful distance, yet near enough to be at hand when need required it, he cultivated his ordinary humor of taciturnity whilst cogitating on the constant attentiveness necessary on his part to secure his old master's only son from the dangers which, he believed, were sure to beset him on his journey to London.

But all this time, what were the reflections of John Hall ? The young student of medicine was now fairly on his road to fortune. Was he anticipating his career, and seeing a brilliant prospect of court patients, and liberal fees ? Was his mind turned the other way, recalling the many admirable pleasant hours he had enjoyed in the familiar scenes he was now leaving ; perchance, never to see again ? Was he regretting the parting with his fond mother, or fixing on his attention the excellent advice he had just heard from her, touching his behavior with such young persons of her sex as he might be about to associate with ?

He was neither thinking of the past nor the future ; lamenting his separation from a doting parent, nor caring in the least

whether he was or was not to mingle with women of any sort. In honest truth, he was merely intently questioning of himself whether mustard, made with verjuice, very sharp, and somewhat thick, was the properest remedy for a quartan-ague.

Thus proceeded the two for sundry miles, not without exciting some curiosities from every one they met, and a few jeers from such rude and rustic persons as are sure to be found in every highway, conducting of themselves as though they had a patent for sauciness. The young physician was often roused from his deep studies by some unmannerly waggoner, or insolent groom, shooting out certain inquiries as to the number of years that had elapsed since his steed had had a feed of corn; and a sturdy beggar clapped his dish on his head, and fell on his marrowbones, in a seeming ecstasy of devotion as the youth passed him, crying how blessed he was in being allowed a sight of one of the very cattle with which Nebuchadnezzar had gone to grass.

At first, John Hall had given no thought of the appearance he cut on so sorry an animal; and, as regarded his own apparelling, was well content with the cap and feather, the sober suit of russet, and the stout boots and gloves he had on; but at last, hearing of so many scurvy terms applied to his horse, he got ashamed of it, and would have preferred going the journey on foot, had it been possible. He knew, however, there was no help for it, but to make the way as short as possible; therefore he put his spurs to the lank sides of the poor beast, and urged him to the top of his speed.

If it was ridiculous to see the tall, gaunt, misshapen thing that had been provided for the young traveller's riding, proceeding at a walk, it was a thousand times more so when he was displaying his anatomy in his awkward attempt at a canter, rendered the more ludicrous when Simon Stockfish came after on the ugly brute he had under him, the which he was urging him to use his heavy heels with such expedition as would serve to keep him at a convenient distance from the other. Whether it was the clattering of this brute's iron hoofs, or the loud shout set up when passing them by a miller and his wife going together on one horse to market, that startled the old grey, is not known; but certain is it he took fright, and put his old bones to such good use, as made all who beheld him marvel exceedingly.

Simon Stockfish, in no small alarm, strove all he could to get nigher to his master; and, what with the spur and the horrible discordant noises set up by all who were in

sight of the travellers, the young horse got as much frightened as the old one, and set off after him, striking fire from his hoofs every time they came on the hard ground, and making such a din with his heels as was deafening to hear.

Simon pulled his statne cap over his brows, that it should not fall off his head; and then, digging his knees into Jack's fat sides, and grasping his long mane with one hand as the other held the reins, kept his gaze fixed upon the figure of his young master, who sat firmly in his seat. The increased clattering behind him, and the shouts and screams by which he was assailed on all sides, did not, as may easily be believed, serve to lessen Dapple's fear; and, therefore, the two continued their course to the huge amusement of some, and the no less alarm of others, for many miles.

As they passed through the villages, the casements were thrown open, and aspects of alarm and wonder projected through them. The pigs rushed one way, the geese fled another. The parish bull galloped bellowing to the gate that looked into the road, with the cows at his heels. The sheep huddled together to what they thought the safest corner of the field. The tinker's ass set up a hideous bray, as he rose affrighted from his bed of nettles, in the pound, and the fowls took refuge on the top of the cage; whilst the children got out of the way with all possible speed, and, when the danger was passed, saluted the cause of it with the full energy of their lungs, and, like enough, the more mischievous sort took to throwing of stones ere the horsemen were well out of their neighborhood.

At last the travellers came to a wide heath, through which was a road that continued for several miles. And now, as they were not assailed by the screams and shoutings which accompanied their flight, because of their nor meeting any one, save an old woman, driving her pig to the next town, who fled opposite both ways over the heath, as soon as Dapple and Jack became visible, and both the horses, being horribly tired of the exertions they had made, never having been so put to it all their lives before, they gradually slackened their speed till each resumed the sober pace with which he had started.

John Hall looked for his attendant, and spying him at the customary distance, without a word said, for from a natural shyness he was not much given to speech with any one, he returned into the train of studious reflection the running away of his goodly steed interrupted. Simon Stockfish beheld

his charge in safety; and he was so content, he also, without any manner of difficulty, and with as little commodity of phrase, fell again into thinking of the dangers that threatened his young master, whereof the imminent one, from which he had but now escaped, he marvelled hugely he had not expected.

So intent did they soon become in their several thoughts as to be totally regardless of all around. The student of medicine was canvassing, in his mind, the question whether Galen or Hippocrates were the better authority in the treatment of fevers, when, of a sudden, he felt himself rudely seized by the arm and leg, and in a moment was on the ground, and completely in the power of two exceeding suspicious-looking tatterdemalions. Simon Stockfish, at the same time, was cudgeling of his brains to find the best method of securing his young charge in safety to his journey's end, when he was pounced on in a like manner; and, ere he could touch a weapon, was completely at the mercy of his rude captors.

The incautious travellers looked monstrosity astonished, as may readily be supposed, at finding of themselves in a situation so little to be coveted. They had not noticed that darkness was fast approaching, and they seemed to have been quite regardless of the many miles of desolate heath they had to pass ere they could arrive at the place appointed for their night's lodging. It standeth to reason also, that they were equally ignorant of the neighborhood of the rude knaves who had so suddenly sprung upon them out of a hollow made by digging for sand, that was close upon their path, where they apparently had lain in ambush.

Neither spoke a word, their ordinary poverty of speech being in no way improved by the unexpected peril in which they found themselves, but gazed with looks made up of astonishment, doubt, and fear, at each of the scowling, villainous countenances of which they had just made the unwelcome acquaintance. Nothing there were they likely to find to afford them comfort of any sort; nor, from a glance of their soiled, patched, and rent appareling, could it be supposed they would gain any greater degree of contention. And when their eyes met the threatening weapons, each villain held over them huge knives and heavy clubs, they presently gave themselves up to be as dead men as ever were measured for their coffins.

It was not long before their rude captors proved to them what little benefit they were like to receive at their hands; for, with di-

vers horrible oaths and demands to each, which were but too intelligible to them, and with sundry strange phrases to each other, neither Simon nor his young master could tell the meaning of, they took to plun'ering them, the which they did with such famous expedition, that in a minute or so, man and master were as naked as ever they were born.

After some discourse, however, amongst themselves, the robbers made them put on garments they threw off for that purpose; and when the young physician had got his legs into a pair of greasy slops big enough for a Hollander, and a tattered jerkin, that looked to have been measured for the Colossus of Rhodes, and Simon Stockfish had placed over his limbs a suit of faded velvet, exceedingly ragged, patched, and soiled, that might have suited one half his size, they were savagely bid to go with their plunderers, on their peril making any noise or attempting to escape.

All then left the ordinary road, and struck into a narrow track, numbers of which appeared to traverse the heath, crossing each other in all directions; and this they followed, through the innumerable windings whereof it seemed to consist, for a good mile, keeping a perfect silence the whilst. To prisoners so surrounded, escape was out of the question. They came, at last, to a stagnant pond, whereat they halted a moment; and one of the knaves, on whose visage gallows was written in as legible characters as ever were met with, put his knuckles to his mouth and blew so shrill a whistle, it seemed to Simon and his master to pierce their very ears. This had scarce been done when, at a great distance, another was heard in reply. John Hall looked in the direction whence it came, but nothing met his eye but a wide expanse of heath, all beyond being wrapped in mist that looked as though it would shortly shroud the whole neighborhood in darkness.

At this the thieves turned into another bye-path, two of their company, as before, riding the tired steeds of their disconsolate captives, and the others keeping close to their elbows. Having proceeded thus, nigh upon a quarter of a mile without sight or sound, beyond what hath already been described, Simon Stockfish was startled by the sudden rising from the ground close behind him, where he had hitherto lain concealed in the thick fern that grew there, a boy, who appeared scarcely to have reached his tenth year. His visage was exceeding dusky, with piercing black eyes, and having an abundance of dark hair hanging confusedly

about his neck and shoulders. His feet and legs were bare, his head without covering of any sort, and such pitiful rags as he had on could barely be called garments.

Saying something which was very Hebrew to the captives, but was answered in a like jargon by one of their dishonest companions, the child instantly made a loud noise so like the barking of a shepherd's dog, that the young student of magic... imagined some animal of the sort was at his heels. He had not done this a minute when a like cry was heard at a distance—the boy then dropped at his length into the fern as quickly as he had risen from it, and the rest proceeded along a path scarcely visible. They met with no one, and little likelihood was there, as it seemed to the poor distressed prisoners, of such meeting; when, as they came under an ancient tree whereof a few branches bore leaves its withered stem gave no sign of, a shaggy grey head and grizzly beard were thrust out of the rotten trunk, and the leader of the party was addressed in the same strange language that Simon Stockfish and his young master had so recently heard.

Some conversation followed betwixt the confederates, whereupon the person in the hollow tree took to hooting like an owl, which he did so to the life, any one might have believed an owl was close at hand. The sound had hardly been uttered, when it was replied to as though a similar bird was not far off, and then, with a few unintelligible words, which doubtless comprised some direction, the grizzly head and beard were withdrawn into the tree, and once more the party proceeded.

They went not a hundred yards before they approached a deep sand-pit, concealed from view till any one came close upon it, by thick brushwood growing all around the brink. The leader pushed his way through this, by a track it looked impossible could be discovered by any who knew it not. All at once a voice demanded something, and so close at hand was it, it appeared to come from amongst them, yet was no one visible, notwithstanding both the captives glanced in all directions. A reply was given by the one who had acted as leader, and shortly after John Hall and his serving-man found themselves descending a narrow zig-zag path of great steepness. The barking of dogs below became now audible even to the dealest of the party; and then the deep voice of a man calling them roughly to hold their peace.

As they got lower down, they might have beheld two or three tents of soiled and

patched canvas, rendered almost black by long exposure to all sorts of weathers. Then in one place there was perceptible a huge fire burning, with a monstrous kettle over it, and several figures grouped around; further off, a large mastiff-bitch chained to a stake, with two or three meaner dogs at large close by, barking with all their might, till a terrible tall fellow left the fire, and with a huge whip belabored them so heartily, it stopped their tune presently; nevertheless, as the strangers approached, they one and all kept ever and anon snapping, snarling and growling, as though, as they dared, they would do them some horrible mischief.

Upon reaching level ground, the thieves and their prisoners were welcomed with a riotous chorus of shouts and acclamations, sundry scurvy jests were passed and answered, but no violence was offered to the captives save by an old hag, who was superintending the cookery, and hit Simon Stockfish a smart blow over his pate with a wooden ladle she held in her hand, because he replied not to some question of hers, he could not understand a word of, the which seemed exquisite pleasant sport to divers of her associates of both sexes, for they set up a loud laugh. The clamor they made suddenly brought out of the bettermost of the tents a person who had evidently some authority over them, for, as soon as they heard his voice, as it appeared abusing them for creating of such a din, they at once became as dumb as fishes, and slunk out of the way as quietly as they could.

This man by his look and bearing assumed to be of a superior sort. He was of a dark visage, somewhat of the Moorish cast, with beard and hair of a deep black, and eyes of a like tint, but so terribly piercing, the horriblest swaggerer that ever was seen in Finsbury Fields must have been awed by a glance of them. In figure he was as well limbed as the finest gallant at Court, and though his apparelling was nothing more than a stout suit of buckram, it sat on him better than did the prodigalest show of braveries on many of greater state. He looked not to be more than thirty at the most, and was in the full pride of vigorous manhood, tall, stout of limb, with an eye like a hawk, and the tread of a conqueror.

Examining the strangers with a searching glance, as he approached them, he sharply addressed the man who had appeared the leader of the party by whom they had been attacked. The answer he received seemed only to set him on a severer scrutiny, and he regarded the student of medi-

cine for a few moments in silence. His black brows at first were knit fiercely, and his swarthy visage wore an aspect of mistrust and disquietude; but as his gaze rested on the pale, thoughtful countenance of John Hall, his look grew gradually less threatening, until there appeared in it so much of sympathy as would have given confidence to the youth had he observed it. This, however, he could not have done, seeing that, with a sense of apprehension his situation gave some warrant for, as soon as he beheld the flashing eyes of the person so intently observing him, he fixed his own on the ground.

The other then turned his gloomy visage towards Simon Stockfish, but the honest serving-man shrank not from his fiery gaze, as his master had. He put his ordinary grave face on the matter, as though he was as much at home under such sharp glances as under the mild looks of the studious youth beside him. Nevertheless was his mind exceedingly busy.

"How now, knave!" exclaimed he of the dusky visage, finding the man kept a countenance under his scrutiny, as if it was iron or stone, and took not his eyes off for a single moment. "I'll warrant thou'lt know me again after this long perusal of me." Simon still steadily gazed on the terrible bright eyes before him, but said never a word.

"Fool!" continued the man, savagely enraged as much at Simon's taciturnity as at his indifference to his threatening looks. "Hast never a tongue in thy head? Speak, fellow, or I'll have thy coxcomb manled in such fashion as will make thee have cause to hold me in remembrance thy life long."

"What dost want of me?" asked the other, in a quiet tone without altering his features a jot.

"I'faith, not much, seeing that my hawks have left not a feather on thee worth plucking," replied his questioner, a smile passing over his comely features. "I merely seek at thy hands some small intelligence, which thou hast best give, and give quickly. Whence comest thou, and where art going?"

Simon Stockfish paused ere he answered. He thought that the safety of his beloved master's only son now depended on his prudence, and was determined to be wonderfully cautious, that nothing he said should bring the youth into any jeopardy.

"I came whence I was sent," said Simon, very quietly, "and I am going on a lawful journey."

"Why, thou peremptory slave, dost dare give such words to me!" exclaimed the

other, his dark visage instantly becoming a thousand times more gloomy.

It was evident that Simon's notions of prudence were of a strange sort. However, he now thought to anger a man in whose power his young master was, ought to be avoided, and, by a plan that looked to him wondrous politic, he sought to put himself on better terms with him.

"I ask not thy business, and see not why thou shouldest demand mine," observed the serving-man, with his ordinary gravity, "notwithstanding there be divers thy very worshipful good friends, to whom any certain intelligence of thee would be right welcome, or I am hugely mistaken."

"Ha! dost know me, fellow?"

"Exceeding well," answered Simon, disregarding the angry scowl now fixed on him. "Thou art Black Sampson, king of the gipsies—at least, so thou wert called at the 'sizes, where I saw thee tried for sheep-stealing—but I was heartily glad afterwards when I heard, by the Hue and Cry, that thou hadst broke prison the day before they were to have hanged thee."

Simon Stockfish was not a whit happier in his notions of what was politic, than he found he had been in his ideas of prudence. The scowl of the recognized gipsy grew every moment more threatening, and his eyes flashed fearfully, when he heard the ignominious fate alluded to, which had so nearly overtaken him. With a horrible imprecation, he seized the astonished serving-man by the throat—and it looked at first terribly as though he would throttle him, but he suddenly gave him a swing that sent him forcibly to the earth, several paces distant from where he had stood, and, after shouting in a savage mood, some directions to his lawless associates, Black Sampson turned on his heel, and presently disappeared within the tent whence he had come.

The command was obeyed almost as soon as uttered, and the hapless travellers found themselves rudely seized, and their hands tightly bound behind them by a group of the most villainous, hang-dog, rascal thieves that could be met with anywhere. John Hall had heard all that had passed, but was so taken by surprise, he could make no interference in behalf of his thoughtless companion, and suffered himself to be roughly handled by the gipsies without either complaint or resistance.

CHAPTER VI.

Why, thou simple parish ass, thou, didst thou never see any gipsies ! These are a covey of gipsies, and the bravest new covey that ever constable flew at.

BEN JONSON.

For, when Dame Nature first
Had fraunde hir heavenly face,
And thoroughly bedecked it
With goodly gleames of grace,
It lyked her so well ;
Lo here, quod she, a piece
For perfect shape that passeth all
Apelles' work in Greece.

GASCOIGNE.

THE two sat for some time on the ground in silence, with reflections none of the pleasantest. All the gang appeared to have left them, when they had grown tired of the pastime they had found in their unresisting victims. Jeers unanswered, and ill-usage unresisted, soon becomes sorry sport : and, after the roughest of their company had put them within the length of the savage mastiff-bitch, saying of certain words to the brute—which she seemed to understand on the instant, for she crouched down and fixed her eyes on them, as though, moved they an inch, she would tear them to pieces—they drew off, all of them to another part of the pit.

The young student, by degrees, recovered from the amazement and fear in which he had been thrown, and began to consider the perilous situation in which he was placed. He had ascertained that he was a prisoner in an encampment of the Rommanees, or gipsies. Of their leader he had heard, for his name was the terror of all the country round for twenty miles. He was called Sampson, from his huge strength, and Black, from his dark visage; and this name was as well known in cottage and hall as Guy of Warwick, or Robin Hood. He had the subtlety of the fox, and daring of the lion ; and so skilfully did he commit his depredations, that nothing could be traced to him, although there never was any hesitation in pronouncing Black Sampson to be the malefactor.

There was much of mystery and romance in the tales that were circulated over the country about him, which his handsome features, noble figure, and courteous bearing of himself, whenever at fairs and wakes he chose to mingle with the villagers and townsfolks such festivals always brought together, were sure to increase. He won all the prizes at cudgel-play, wrestling, and all country sports whatever ; and he had ever borne

his good fortune with such exceeding good-humor, it seldom gave umbrage to any. It so chanced, however, that his ordinary good fortune once forsook him—not in games, for that would not have mattered so much, but in crime.

There was a shepherd on a neighboring farm named Wattie Elliott, from over the border, as fine a fellow of his inches as the race of Elliotts ever boasted of. He had missed one of his flock. Nothing could exceed his vigilance and care, yet it was barely a week when he missed another.

Wattie had many reasons for wishing to capture the depredator of his master's flock. His own honesty might be suspected, were the knave allowed to escape with his booty a third time. He was as certain Black Sampson was the thief as he was of his own existence, and his inclination to catch him was wonderfully sharpened by the recollection of the broken head he got of him at the last cudgel-play. Wattie was a shrewd fellow, and feared nothing in human shape, and he had a son now close upon manhood, as strong, as active, as sharp, and as bold as himself, on whose crown Black Sampson had left a similar token of his mastery at cudgelling.

The father and son kept watch almost day and night, and put in practice certain notable, clever schemes for the detection of the sheepstealer ; but the king of the gipsies was a match for both of them ; and tired, as it were, of their useless labors, they seemed all at once to slacken in their vigilance. They gave out they were going that night to the next town to bring an addition to their master's flocks he had purchased of a farmer there, leaving their place to be filled by a lad, whose carelessness was well known, and were seen at dusk proceeding in the direction they had stated.

Two hours afterwards, whilst the boy was intently amusing himself hunting water-rats, a man was stealthily approaching the folded flock. Nothing could exceed the caution he exhibited as he crept along the shadow of the hedges, stopping frequently to listen. Save the bleating of the sheep, he could hear nothing but the barking of the dog, set on by the boy to catch the vermin, and his occasional shouting—but both boy and dog were completely hid from view.

After awhile, he lightly threw himself over the gate, and discovered his prey in the adjoining field, to get at which there was but one way—by leaping the only part of the fence that was not impassable. He was the best leaper in the whole country round ; but the high thick hedge and deep

ditch that surrounded the field, except in this place, was not to be attempted.

Before leaping it, he seemed to think it necessary to examine the other side, and, by great difficulty, attained such a place on the bank, that he had a full view of the place where he must alight, and the sheep close at hand, in the most convenient place possible for abstracting one without attracting attention. After, as it seemed, satisfying his extreme caution, he went a few paces back, took a quick run, and sprung over the gap without touching a twig; nevertheless, on coming to the ground, the turf broke from under him, and he found himself in a pit that had with extreme cunning been prepared by the vigilant shepherds.

"Hurrah! We ha' gotten him at last!" shouted the elder Elliott, springing from his concealment in the branches of a pollard, close on the spot, at the same moment with his equally active son; and then both flung themselves upon the athletic gipsy. "Hold thee grip, lad! Hold'n fast! Body and bones, keep'n under thee!"

There was a fearful struggle. The gipsy was taken at a disadvantage; but never was his immense strength seen so palpably as in his efforts to throw off of him his two powerful assailants. They held him as dogs do a bull—the father encouraging his son, and the son putting forth all his strength to assist his parent. A few imprecations only burst from the detected sheep-stealer, as he strove with the force of a giant to free himself from the grasp of the shepherds. The perspiration stood in big drops on his dusky forehead, and every limb was strained till the flesh seemed to take on itself the hardness of iron.

Young Wattie Elliott appeared to discommod the struggling gipsy the most. He had obtained a powerful hold, in which he commanded both his captive's arms, and the tremendous exertions the latter made to roll over him, and free his pinioned limbs, were baffled by the young man's caution and strength.

"Ha! Sampson, my mon," said old Elliott, "thou art in the grip o' the Philistines, and if thou dost ever get free, except with the hangman's help, thou mayst split thy wame with laughing at all o' the name o' Elliott."

"Ha! ha!" shouted the gipsy, in tones like some devil incarnate, as the scream of death from the youth, who had held him so long and well, mingled with it. "That laugh thou hast now heard!" He had at last, by one desperate effort, disengaged his right arm from the young shepherd's em-

brace, and in the next moment the knife the sheep-stealer had in his girdle was buried in the heart of his brave opponent.

But the homicide was not free. The bold young Elliott had had of the gipsy was still unloosened, and all in vain were the tremendous struggles the latter made to shake it off, that he might have the better chance of escaping from the father, which he doubted not he could now easily do. Old Elliott, as he caught a glimpse of his son's blood, raised a piercing cry of agony, and sprung upon his murderer with the fury of a maniac.

He struck at him with his clenched fists, tore his hair, dashed his head against the earth, as regardless of the severe wounds he received from the villain's knife as though they inconvenienced him not at all. Perhaps, loss of blood might at last have weakened his efforts, but the fearful cry he had uttered brought to his assistance some hinds who were, according to the plan he had devised for the capture of the sheep-stealer, on their way to join him, and the murderous efforts of Black Sampson were at once put a stop to by a stunning blow on the head from the heavy staff of the first who reached the spot.

The living Wattie Elliott was with great difficulty drawn from the unequal conflict, and he had hardly been placed on level ground when he swooned away: but it was a still greater difficulty to move the dead Elliott, whose hold was as a vice. The strength of all there could not unclasp the embrace of the corpse, and it was not till they took unusual means that they succeeded in their endeavors. The youth had done his father's bidding in a terrible earnest fashion. He had held so fast, Black Sampson could not have released himself of his own means had he strove ever so.

The gipsy was tried for the murder, not for sheep-stealing, as Simon Stockfish had said—perchance thinking the truth might be unpalatable—but, as the serving man had rightly declared, had escaped from prison the day preceding that appointed for his execution. Wattie Elliott recovered of his wounds, but when he heard the murderer of his son had escaped, he swore a deadly oath he would hunt him night and day until he had had his heart's blood.

Black Sampson, previous to this, had been, as hath already been stated, popular with every one; but now he dared not show his face, so general was the execration in which his name was held. In truth, he had become a changed man. He had lost his cheerful humor, that had made him such

pleasant company, and had grown gloomy, savage, and distrustful of all around him. Occasionally, to those he affected, he would appear in a better mood; but he was ordinarily sullen, capricious, and given to fits of ungovernable passion.

John Hall had heard what hath here been stated, and kept ruminating on these matters without drawing from them anything of pleasure or consolation. Simon Stockfish had heard all this and much more to boot. The gossip of the whole country round, concerning certain marvellous adventures of these Rommances, in which figured a most lovely creature of that strange race, and was, as may be supposed, the subject of infinite speculation to such as could get the slightest knowledge of her. Simon's thoughts were busy with a thousand strange stories, and the unpleasantness they created was not a whit lessened by the behavior of the savage brute that kept guard over him and his young master.

There seemed such a fascination in the snake-like eyes of the mastiff-bitch, that he could not take his own eyes off her. To the curious spectator, the brute might have seemed to have been carved out of the marble stone, so motionless did she stand; but Simon could see something in the steady glare of her organs of sight he felt assured might in a moment prove—in a manner he liked not at all—that not only was *she* flesh and blood, but those *she* kept watch over were of a like material. In sober truth, Simon was horribly afraid the fierce-looking animal would spring on him and tear him to pieces; therefore, for a wonder, his thoughts kept no longer any account of his young master's peril—his own seeming so imminent he could regard nothing else.

During this interval, the night had been gradually closing in, and the only light which illuminated the scene was from the huge fire, where stood the caldron already alluded to. This was at some distance from the prisoners, who might have considered themselves, but for the watchful mastiff so unpleasantly close to them, quite unregarded by the gipsy brotherhood, whom they could see in various groups; some sitting, some standing, some lying their lengths on the ground, eating, drinking, playing of cards and tric-trac, but all taking no more heed of them than if they had been stocks or stones. They could also hear the murmur of their conversation one with another, now shouting, anon laughing, with presently a silence broken only by one a whistling a

morrice, or some other murmuring of a passionate ballad.

How long this state of things might have remained, God only knoweth; but to the huge comfort of Simon Stockfish, it was suddenly put a stop to by the re-appearance of Black Sampson, who strode from the tent, now wearing a slouched hat, and carrying in his hand a stout cudgel, and made direct to his prisoners.

"I am sorry you have met with molestation, young sir," observed he, directing of his speech to John Hall, with a courteous manner, "but my rascals are rough and rude, and are like enough to meddle with other folks' goods in a way that, I am willing to believe, is none of the civillest. Perchance, some amends may be made for the hindrance you have experienced."

Here he busied himself awhile in unfastening the chain of the mastiff, who by many canine demonstrations testified her delight at her master's presence.

"I would be right glad," gravely observed the young student, "to be put in a way for the pursuing of my journey to London."

"Ah, that he would, worthy Master Sampson—God he knows," exclaimed Simon Stockfish. His fears relieved by the attention of the mastiff being drawn off him, his thoughts turned at once to a consideration of the proper means to be employed for the liberation of his young master, and he thought it would be admirable policy to take advantage of Black Sampson's present amiable mood.

"Hold thy malapert tongue, knave, or I'll give thee such a rubbing down with this goodly napkin, as shall make thee infinitely careful to avoid such napery the rest of thy days."

This ominous speech from the murderer of Wattie Elliott, assisted by a significant flourish of the very formidable weapon he had in his hand, and a menacing growl from the mastiff, who seemed waiting only for a signal from her master to be at his throat, made Simon Stockfish quake in his shoes.

"Nay, I meant no offence, o' my life!" cried he, in as humble a tone as he could put on, "and, for mine own part, I am satisfied you are of no such crabbed disposition as I have been told you are, and that Wattie Elliott's murd——"

A heavy blow on the head stopped the incantitious serving man's speech, and laid him at his length at the feet of the enraged gipsy.

"'Sblood!" exclaimed he, looking to be in a monstrous passion. "Dost think I will be bearded by such a sorry ass as thou?"

Then, turning to divers of his company, who were approaching the spot, attracted doubtless by their leader's violence, he shouted, "Keep me these hated Basne in close prison till I return ; and, mark me, as they seek to escape, cut their villainous throats." A moment after he had unloosed the dog, and was seen with her rapidly bounding up the path that led out of the pit.

It was some time before Simon Stockfish recovered from the stunning blow he had received, and then he found himself stretched on his back, on a rude sort of bed made of fern, that was in one of the tents, his head bound up, and his arm bandaged. There was a dull, aching pain in his head, and a strange feeling of sickness, but this was all the inconvenience he experienced. As he opened his eyes, they fell on the anxious countenance of his young master, who was standing over him in his own proper garments, feeling his pulse. The only other person in the place was an old crone, who, by the lamp she carried in her hand, he could observe was of the peculiar dark visage of the wandering people, into whose power they had fallen, and was dressed somewhat in the Eastern fashion, though her apparel was of the coarsest. She, too, was regarding him ; and with an exceeding curioseness.

"I doubt not, with my teaching, thou wouldest in time become a skilful leech," observed she, turning to John Hall, on noticing the signs of recovery in his fellow-captive.

"I doabt it not, good dame!" courteously replied the young physician. "Thou seepest especialy well versed in the treatment of green wounds, and in the employment of simples of all kinds."

"I warrant you," said the other, with a very evident satisfaction in herself, "and where wouldest seek such knowledge, if not from Rajia, the mother of the Romanees, to whom for three-score years the heavenly influences have been made more familiar than to any other of our tribe, since we wandered from the sunny clime wherein, as our traditions tell, we were a mighty people. But thou hast thyself not been unattentive to the mirths that are continually around thee. It was well for this poor Busno thou wert by, or the stroke of our chief would have spoiled him for this world. As the stars may witness for me, though I have had to mend much of his marring, I have not had one instance of such eminent mischief as this looked to be."

At this moment, a gipsy woman hastily entered the tent, looking wondrously disturbed, and, after some few words passed

between them in their strange language, she, who had called herself Rajia, placing the lump in the hand of the young student, and bidding him give the wounded man a posset she had just before made for him, followed the one who had summoned her out of the tent.

John Hall quietly put in practice the directions he had heard, and Simon Stockfish as quietly submitted to them ; but the one could not keep from reflecting upon the knowledge he had got of simple surgery from the ancient gipsy-woman's discourse, as she assisted him in dressing the wound of his luckless attendant ; and much he marvelled that neither Hippocrates, nor Galen, nor Mathias Carnax, nor Alexius Pædomontanus, nor Canoatherius, nor, in short, any writer of his acquaintance, ancient or modern, had given any note whatever of such things ; whilst the other marveiled to find himself in that strange place, and to hear the grave discourse that had just passed between his young master and a gipsy beldame. After indurging in all manner of inward questioning as to how these matters came about, he arrived at the interesting discovery that he had got his head broke, for not being sufficiently mindful of his tongue, just as the posset began to have its proper effect upon him, and thereupon he fell into a sound sleep.

John Hall sat himself down on a stool that was there, over-against his patient, and was deeply intent on a volume of Aristotle he had long been in the habit of carrying about with him—it was so especial a favorite—when his studies were suddenly broken in upon by his being seized by the arm, and urgently desired to go on the instant, with his so recent instructress, in a case of life or death.

The book of the young physician was in his pocket in a moment, and he in readiness to go wherever he might be wanted. After certain hasty injunctions, seemingly of a mysterious import, which did not in any way enlighten him as to the nature of the case that demanded his assistance so urgently, his guide led him out of the tent, and in a few minutes he found himself in another, in all respects a direct opposite to the one he had left.

It was furnished not only with all manner of comforts, but there was in it even an air of luxury, that, as may be supposed, surprised him greatly. There was a floor of boards, with a small yet rich Turkey carpet in the centre, a handsome bedstead quaintly carved, with chairs of a like pattern covered with velvet. On a table near the bed, both of

which had the goodliest covers eye ever beheld, were a silver lamp burning, of very ancient make, as was also the deep dish of the same metal close to it with dried fruit, and the flask which stood by a tall Venetian glass. On one of the chairs was a lute, and a theorbo stood in the corner. An ewer and basin of antique china, with sundry articles for the toilet, were on a further table, having on it the whitest of napery; and an empty cradle, with furniture of a like whiteness, was close against it. Some few articles of wearing apparel were scattered here and there, and on a large oak chest were a quarter staff and a long rapier.

But the object on which John Hall's attention was quickly engrossed was a very beauteous and very young creature, seeming in age to be but a child. Yet it was evident she was a mother, for none but such could exhibit such terrible deep grief over the babe she held close pressed to her breast, ever and anon unclosing of her arms to gaze at the pallid rigid aspect there presented to her, and then, uttering a wild cry of distress, and pressing the senseless infant still closer to her breast, frantically paced about, making of all manner of moving exclamations.

A protrusion of dark glossy hair fell in disorder about her dusky neck and shoulders; she was divested of her outer garment, and wore but a sort of loose jacket and petticoat, whereof the only thing worthy of note was that the materials were exceedingly fine and white. Yet did all this negligence the greater set off the perfect loveliness of her countenance and person. Her full dark eyes brimming with tenderness, her exquisite rosy mouth, delicate pearly teeth, her dainty small hands, her rounded arms, and tender swelling bosom, were all apparent to the enamored gaze; added to this, she showed a pair of dusky feet, of such marvellous beauty, the sight whereof would have ravished an anchorite.

The young physician was sufficiently amazed at what he saw. He gazed curiously, and with no slight interest, but he would have done the like had this exquisite object been made of marble or wood. A few words from Rujia quickly put his indifference to a hard trial, for scarce had they been uttered, when the young beauty suddenly rushed to him, knelt at his feet, and, in the absolutest passion of tears and prayers, besought of him to restore to her the babe.

At this he felt wondrously moved. Indeed his heart beat quicker, and a moisture came into his eyes; and he was so confused by the suddenness and energy of the appeal, he scarce knew what he would be at.

Nevertheless, he presently became himself like a grave and careful physician, made certain inquiries, and closely examined the state of his little patient. As the mother feared it was dead, infinite was the contention of her, when he pronounced the child to be in a fit only; and, when he bade her to be of good cheer, for he would recover it presently, he had such prodigal store of blessings, the remembrance of them brought him comfort all his life after.

Thereupon he issued his orders promptly, and spoke so convincingly, yet so modestly without, his directions were followed without a question or doubt, and the still senseless child was given into his hands by the young mother, with the trust of her entire heart, to be done with as he thought proper. She watched him, however, with an earnest attentiveness, that looked as though her own life hung on the issue, and when, after the child had been placed in a vessel of hot water for some minutes, he feasted his breath, she seemed herself to breathe for the first time.

How delightedly she beheld the color returning to the pale lips, and animation to the fixed eyes, words have no power to tell. Her joy, however, at last became so excessive, that on the young physician's declaring his little patient to be fully recovered, she caught hold of the astonished youth by the hand, and pressed it to her heart; then she feasted from off her finger a ring of curious workmanship, with a fair stone set therein, and placed it on one of his, with wondrous great heaps of thanks and blessings, and finally she snatched her child, now crying lustily in the arms of Rujia, who was intent on dressing it, and, after a prodigious deal of crying, laughing, and caressing, she stilled its cries with that sweet nourishment, which Nature, out of her very infinite bounty, bestoweth on every tender mother.

Whereupon there was a silence of some few minutes. John Hall was so bewildered, he seemed to have lost all power of speech; Rujia busied herself in striving to put the place in some order, muttering all the while; and the fond young mother was in too happy a mood to speak. After a few minutes the young physician became aware that an animated conversation was going on betwixt his two companions, and, although he understood never a word that was said, the youth could perceive by many signs that he was the subject of their talk.

Presently he was courteously asked his name, and bid to show the palm of his hand, whereupon much noise was took of it by both women; the younger in especial traing the

lines upon it with as much attentiveness as concern.

"Thy palm telleth but a sad story," observed she. "Sore trials await thee. Thy heart will be fiercely wrung; but, take courage; sweet heart; though there be much deep suffering denoted in these lines, there is happiness in an ample measure at the end. Nevertheless, be assured, whatever ill befalls thee, Xariqua is thy fast friend, and with all her heart will help thee at thy need. I prythee take my best wishes, good Master Hall, and be not overcast when thou and mis ry b come bedfellows. When thy time cometh, thy good fortune will be so great, all thy previous suffering must be considered as of no account."

Before he could recover from his surprise, the old gipsy woman had led him out of that tent into the one he had previously quitted.

There he found Simon Stockfish just awaking from a refreshing sleep, and when Rujia bade them make haste as they loved their lives and liberties, the faithful serving-man sprang from his couch, put on his own garments, which, like his master's, had been restored, and declared himself ready to start that moment. He had experienced such uncivil treatment since he had fallen into the hands of the bold outlaws, that he was right glad to take advantage of any opportunity that offered to get his young master away from such rascally company.

Neither was John Hall loath to go. Nevertheless, from some strange cause or another, he felt exceeding desirous of knowing something concerning the young and beautiful creature with whom he had by such singular chance become acquainted. He at last got so much the better of his natural timidity as to express his surprise, that one so very young and comely should be a gipsy.

It would doubtless have been better had he held his peace, for it brought on him so fierce a torrent of abuse from the old hag, for the most part in her own language, and she looked so savagely, he would have been right glad had he not been so bold; but when she bade them, as they valued their wretched lives, keep close on her footsteps, for she was about to put them in the way of escape, adding something in her own jargon which, had they known its tendency, they would have hesitated trusting themselves with her—they gave themselves, without a word said, entirely to her guidance, and she led them quickly yet cautiously from the tent, out of the pit by a path different from the one by which they had arrived. They saw not a creature of any kind, nor heard sign

of such, till, after threading a very narrow and intricate path, they came to a green hollow, wherein, to the infinite great joy of Simon Stockfish, they beheld their two goodly steeds, Dapple and Jack, whose loss had added marvellously to the uneasiness his master's capture had created in Simon's mind.

Their somewhat uncivil guide showed them where their harness and other property were hid, and assisted them to bridle and saddle,—the while giving them directions as to the road they were to pursue; then, bidding them to use their utmost speed, if they wished to save their worthless lives, she disappeared behind a clump of brushwood. Simon Stockfish had just finished fastening the belt round his body which held fast his master's stock of apparel, and had got one foot in the stirrup, when, hearing a savage growl, he quickly turned round, and there, but a few yards from him, looking in the moonlight more ferocious than ever, he beheld the mastiff bitch that had so lately put him in such imminent bodily fear.

He was paralysed. He felt sure his more brutal master could not be far off, and the fate of Wattie Elliott stared him in the face in all its horrors. Uttering two or three sharp clear barks that rung on his ears like a death knell, the dog was bounding in all its savage fury towards him, when, ere half the distance was passed, she was seen to spring in the air, with a piercing howl of agony, as the loud report from an arquebus close at hand burst upon the ear, and she fell to the ground horribly mangled and dead as a stone.

Almost at the same instant there appeared at the opposite sides of the hollow, two persons—one was quickly recognized by the alarmed travellers as their unpleasant acquaintance, Black Sampson,—who no sooner caught sight of the man over-against him, than, as if seized with a sudden panic, he turned quickly round and ran off at his utmost speed; whereupon, the other muttering distinctly the words, "Blood for blood!" flourished his weapon over his head, and started at a desperate rate in pursuit.

The latter was Wattie Elliott. Neither the young physician nor his companion cared to watch the result of the race, but instantly sprung into their saddles; and their steeds, alarmed at the report of the piece, put themselves to their swiftest pace.

CHAPTER VII.

If your worshippe vouchsafe to enter the schoole doore, and walke an hour or twaine within for your pleasure, you shall see what I teache, which present my schoole, my cunning, and myselfe to your worthy patronage.

THE SCHOOLE OF ABUSE.

THE pretended Master Dulcimer was rejoicing, as such noble hearts only can, at the success which attended his efforts to secure the heart's wish of his young friend and patron, having just witnessed his secret marriage with that admirable fair young creature, Mistress Varnon. He had also another source of satisfaction, having succeeded in effecting the liberation of his friend Ben Jonson, who had been put in prison for the death of Gabriel Spencer, and was proceeding intent on his ordinary duties at the playhouse in the Blackfriars, amusing himself monstrously by the way in imagining the distress of that exceedingly starched and antiquated damsel. Aunt Deborah, on discovering she had not only been deprived of her beautiful kinswoman, with whom she had so long been wont to play the terrible tyrant, but had lost her sworn servant also, who had obtained entire possession of her virgin heart.

Truly, if ever man looked in a contented mood, that was he, and it shone in his worshipful sweet countenance with such exceeding brilliancy, that such of the wayfarers who took note of him as he walked, who knew not his extreme worthiness, either by personal knowledge or general repute, set down in their minds, on the first glance, he must needs be as thoroughly happy as any man this side of Heaven. But few men of his day were better known both amongst the citizens and gallants; and, as he had quitted his disguise of the master of music, he was recognized as he passed along the crowded streets; and the courteous, cheerful manner in which he doff'd his beaver to simple and gentle; the blushing girl and the wrinkled dame, and in sooth to persons of all conditions who looked as though they were well pleased at the sight of him, assured them of his infinite happiness and contentation.

Marvel not, gentle reader, they were in some measure deceived. It is not so huge a wonder as it may appear; for divers instances have occurred where the face hath been dressed in smiles, and the heart in sack-cloth and ashes. We cannot be said to be masters of ourselves when we are not masters of our affections, and these are matters the mastery whereof the wisest men have not

been able to obtain. There hath been notable instances of minds framed in the best school of wisdom, teeming with good intent, and full of virtuous resolution, that by a combination of ill circumstances have been forced into the surrendering of their natures to an attachment which cannot be openly encouraged without a sensible disrespect of the world and of themselves. Such feelings, of a surety are not to be justified, are not to be tolerated; yet do they come about in such a manner as often to make such as have the ill-fortune to entertain them, more to be pitied than blamed. Methinks there can scarce be any object more worthy of commiseration than a noble nature enslaved by an unlawful passion, struggling betwixt the extraordinary admirableness of the fair creature he cannot but devote himself to heart and soul, and the natural self-condemnation which he must feel in allowing the existence of a state of things of such infinite unprofitableness to either party.

Whether Master Shakspeare had got himself entangled in this hopeless mesh, our information at this time doth not state. It is but known that occasionally he was given to long fits of perfect abstraction, when his features wore a sad and troubled air; and he would act as though he were but an accountable creature, given to wild fancies, and exceeding strange resolves. Anon he would burst out of the gloom which these humors created, and exceed all waruantable grounds in lightness of behavior, endeavoring to excuse his late sadness by affirming he slept ill o' nights, and was tormented by fearful dreams.

Of a surety he had dreams, and they might well be considered by him of a fearful sort. In part, they were the dreams of his early youth; but the loving faces that haunted his sleep many a midsummer day by the stream side, beneath an antique tree, or on some mossy bank retired from the public eye, though they wore the same features of everlasting beauty, possessed an expression of the very deepest sorrow; the exquisite sweet harmonies which of old were wont to intoxicate his mind with unutterable joy, now, by their mournful and melancholy cadences, filled him with a most painful sadness; and instead of the floral treasures which, with every cheerful hue and pleasant form, threw around him an atmosphere of light and perfume, he beheld nothing but rue and rosemary, willow and cypress, nightshade, and the like sort of plants, the gloomy posies of

When he woke, it was with an apprehension of impending evil he could not readily

divest himself of; yet, not caring to be thought superstitions, he would strive to cast it off by giving himself up to the very wildest flights of an untameable spirit. That he had some secret source of huge disquietude, a shrewd observer might have predicted from these premises; albeit, his behavior was ever of so noble a sort as to win the hearts of all around him, and his admirable cheerful temper did so often and so pleasantly make itself manifest.

However this may have been, it is certain that the mood in which Master Shakspeare went on his way to the playhouse, after a friendly leave-taking of the young Lord Southampton and his loving bride, was, to all appearance, as contented a one as any happy man ever had. After sufficiently amusing of himself with thinking of his antiquated mistress, he fell into a train of pleasant anticipations of the prodigal heaps of happiness in store for his estimable kind friend, and marvellous was the contentation it gave him. From this he presently took to considering of his own affairs; and, in the happy humor he then was, it was in no way surprising his thoughts should light up in the most comfortable part of them—his sweet young son.

He recalled the great solace and pride he had taken in the handsome boy at his last visit, what rare gratification he had experienced in noting his aptness for study, his warm affectionateness and well-disposedness in all things; and, after he had sufficiently basked in the sunshine of the past, he would find for himself a still more sunny future, and enjoy its glowing horizon with more intense transports than he had yet known.

It so chanced that as he was proceeding through Cheap, nigh unto the conduit, quite regardless of every one thing in the world, save his own pleasant thinking, on a sudden his waking dream was broken in upon by some one seizing him by the arm, and accosting him in a strange, wild, and confused manner. On turning round, he beheld a man of decent apprelling, for all it seemed slovenly put on and travel-stained, with an aspect which, though marked in strong lines with exhaustion and alarm, bore in it so much of native benevolence, that the worthiness of the owner scarce admitted of a doubt.

"Master Bifield!" exclaimed his old acquaintance, looking on him with a famous surprise and pleasure, "O' the dickens, what hath brought thy reverence in this ungodly place?" And thereupon he shook hands with him very heartily, and expressed, in his

exquisitest manner, his gratification at the sight of him, swearing he should have no other inn than his own dwelling, in the Clink Liberty, and that not an ordinary in the city should boast of having entertained him, for he would share with none living so covetable a pleasure, and much more of the same courteous sort, seasoned with all manner of choice jests and excellent pleasant conceits; the priest the whilst saying never a word to all his numberless questions and courtesies, for, in truth, he was so bewildered at finding him in so happy a mood, he knew not how to begin the task he had set himself.

"And how goeth on the schooling?" cried he, in his most joyous tone; "and, more especially, how goeth on the scholar?" The worthy priest winc'd at the question, and, in huge confusion and distress, commenced stammering out a few unintelligible words.

"Heart o' me!" exclaimed the happy father, slapping his companion familiarly on the shoulder, "tis the old story. Hunnet is a prodigy and a phoenix, and promiseth to be wiser than Solomon, and worthier than the best saint of them all. Well, if it must needs be, I would as lief see him a bishop as any thing. He shall to Oxford anon, where I have friends willing to do him any service in getting him snug quarters with that most admirable, bountiful hostess—holy Mother Church. But," added he, "dost not think the profession of arms better becomes the name of Shakspeare than that of a clerk? His ancestor did yeoman service at the bloody field of Bosworth: if Hamnet have a like spirit, which I doubt not at all, I see nought to prevent his becoming a captain. Perchance, if he be one of a greatly adventurous disposition, he shall take to seeking new lands in the far ocean, and, as likely as not, come home a mighty admiral. What dost think—eh, man? Why, thou art mute as a fish!"

"Oh, Master Shakspeare!" at last exclaimed the other, in accents that seemed to come from the uttermost depths of his heart.

"Why, how now, my old friend?" said his friend. "Were I not used as I am to thy pale visage, I would swear something aileth thee. O' my lif, thou lookest as melancholy as the stuffed owl in Sir John Clopton's blue parlor. But come with me to my lodging, and I doubt not, ere we have emptied together a flask of my choice Canary, I will have the owl, so thoroughly washed out of thee, thou shalt be glad to forswear melancholy ever after." Thereupon, Master Shakspeare seemed intent on dragging

the vicar by the arm, the which seemed only to make him the more distressed.

"Nay, worthy sir, excuse me, I pray you," replied Master Bifield. "I have other business. I am in no humor—I—I—"

"A fig for thy humor!" cried his companion, his face irradiated with the spirit of good fellowship, as he still strove to pull him along. "If I cannot, of mine own accord, make thy humor fit the entertainment, the which I have done so oft, why there is Will Kempe, against whom the most unsocial of humors standeth not the tithe of a minute; and Ned Allen, who is good company for my Lord Justice and I know not how many more choice ones, who shall be as familiar with thee as sworn gossips. Prythee, come at once."

"I would to God there were no reason for my denial" muttered the vicar, in increased trouble of mind.

"That there cannot be," answered his friend, "for thou hast no unreasonable scruples, and thou mayst be assured, where I lead thee, there shall be nothing discreditable. Come, I am in haste to drink Hamnet's health, which I know thou wilt pledge as fervently as myself."

"Oh, Master Shakspeare!" exclaimed the good priest, as he, in a sort of frenzy of grief, convulsively seized the parent of his beloved scholar by the hand, and pressed it between both his own. "I pray you call to your aid all the philosophy and patience necessary for the hearing of ill tidings."

"Eh, what dost say?" cried Master Shakspeare, hurriedly. "Ill tidings? thou canst have no ill tidings for me."

"In honest truth, they are the worst a loving father ever heard."

"On thy life, man, speak," said the other, as if oppressed with some desperate fear. "Keep me not on the rack. Surely, nothing hath happened to my sweet son?"

"There hath, indeed. He hath been ailing some time, and—it wringeth my heart to tell it—I saw not that the closeness of his pursuit of learning was secretly undermining his health. I knew not that every triumph he achieved over the difficulties of study was at the expense of his precious life. Perchance, my neglect was culpable. Believe me I shall never cease to accuse myself for my fatal remissness; but had I observed anything likely to excite apprehension, I would have sacrificed my own worthless life a thousand times rather than any harm should have come to him. Alack! alack! he was heedless, and I was blind. He having missed school a whole day, and hearing he was sick, I lost no time in get-

ting to Shottery. Oh, worthy sir, I saw a terrible moving sight. I beheld the best, the sweetest scholar master ever had, stretched in a raging fever, with a strange and unconnected speech, pale as a corpse, and wasted to an anatomy. I got me a horse as soon as I might, to bring you to him; for the doctors assured me he had not many hours to live. Master Shakspeare, my excellent good friend!" here suddenly exclaimed the vicar, in a monstrous state of alarm, "I pray you stare not so wildly at me! What hath so blanched your cheeks and lips? Alack! alack! the heavy news hath broken his noble heart. Help, masters, help! I have not strength to save him from falling."

Assistance was quickly rendered, but it was long before the unhappy father recovered sufficiently from the shock to be sensible of what was required of him; but when he did, he lost not a moment of time. The swiftest saddle horses were instantly sought for; and, accompanied by Master Bifield, in as hapless a mood as himself, he rode day and night on the road to Stratford, at the top of their speed.

He spoke scarce a word the whole way. His faculties seemed to be stunned by the terrible intelligence he had heard, and he appeared to be animated but by one wish—that of getting to Shottery in time to see his son before he died. The good vicar watched him anxiously; performing all friendly offices, but forbearing from speech, seeing how completely his humor lay towards silence.

How different was this to all former journeys of his to the fondly cherished scenes of his early griefs and pleasures! There was scarce any noticeable part of this oft-traversed road that could not have called up whole hosts of pleasant remembrances, and many a fellow-traveller had he entertained with admirable choice stories, of strange adventures he had had, or curious scenes he had witnessed in those parts in former times. Not a village but had its narrative, and hardly an inn of any repute, all along the road, but was made to furnish most excellent entertainment; and his fortunate companion at last could not help fancying he had either fallen in with a second Boccaccio, or a twin brother of that exhaustless teller of stories, whose invention supplied continuous amusement for a thousand and one nights.

The case was now altered with a vengeance. Master Shakspeare was company for no one, not even for himself; and he passed by every familiar place as though he

were in a strange land, that had not in it a feature worthy of remark.

But though he was so scant of speech, is it to be presumed he had a similar lack of thought? Perchance, and like enough, his mind was monstrous busy with all manner of miserable reflections, touching the lamentable state of his dear son. The most subduing fears might have got possession of him, and the imminence and unexpectedness of the danger have given to such fears a profound and entire sway. Mayhap he might allow himself to hope things were not so bad as they were represented, and then, as in the usual course, small hopes leading to large ones, his thoughts would presently make for themselves a prospect as fair as that which he had at various occasions so fondly regarded. But his aspect was not one that hath a reasonable familiarity with agreeable anticipations. It expressed a settled grief, such as cannot hold any acquaintance with consolation.

It did not escape the eye of his watchful companion, that he suffered greatly; and, desirous of shortening the sway of his unhappy friend's reflections as much as was possible, he made most strenuous exertions to bring their journey to a quick ending. His endeavors met with such success, that, in a space which then appeared incredible, the exhausted travellers reached the cottage at Shottery.

As he drew near the object of his deep love, the agitation of the miserable father became so great that it was with much ado the worthy priest could keep him in any sort of governance; and, when they were on the threshold of the sick chamber, Master Shakspeare, though but a minute since so terribly impatient, felt as though he dared not enter. He was overpowered with his apprehensions. A sickness of the soul smote him so terribly, the strong man was subdued, and all the father in him seemed to lay with so heavy a load upon his heart, he could neither breathe nor move.

His excellent pious friend saw in how sad a taking he was, and administered to him such cheering encouragement, that, in a brief space, he felt sufficiently invigorated to proceed. The latch was raised, and, like one embarking on a perilous venture, he entered the chamber of his sick child. A glance at that wan face would have assured any but a doting parent that death had there set his seal, and was nigh at hand, waiting to place the instrument in his greedy coffers: but, seeing him alive, after such dreadful agony of fear as he had scarce a moment since experienced, appeared to

render Master Shakspeare unconscious of his son's imminent danger; and, as Hamnet, immediately his father approached, recognised him with a joyful cry, his apprehensions left him, he dropped down beside the bed, took the outstretched little hand, and, with an exhaustless prodigality of fond exclamations, covered it with kisses, whilst tears of exquisite sweet pleasure rushed from the fountains of his love, and did freely force their way over his manly cheeks.

The poor fond father was for awhile left to the full enjoyment of such feelings, and was only roused from them by noting something strange pushing against him, and his hand quickly after touched by something warm. It was the faithful hound, Talbot; who, seeing his master, instead of the riotous demonstrations of joy with which he was wont to greet him, by that wondrous instinct often shown by these sagacious brutes on like occasions, had noiselessly moved towards him, and began licking of his hand, soon after which he showed the same affectionateness to the hand of his attached playmate—the whilst, as though he knew the misfortune that was impending, he wore the pitifullest look eye ever saw—now turning it towards Master Shakspeare, and anon towards Hamnet.

“Poor Talbot! Brave Talbot!” exclaimed his master, patting him on the head—for, in very truth, that was all he could say or do, he was so moved.

“Poor Talbot!” murmured the sick child, the only words he had uttered, that showed he was conscious of what was going on around him, since he had been ill; and, at hearing which, the faithful dog seemed marvellously disturbed, for he whined in a low voice, once more licked the hands of the father and son, and then proceeded slowly to the foot of the bed, where he placed himself so that he could see the faces he had regarded with so fixed a sorrow.

Ever since his playfellow had been confined to his chamber, Talbot had fixed himself in that place, whence neither threats, nor caresses, nor temptations of any sort, could remove him. He refused his food, he took no notice of any of the family, or of the different visitors who entered and went out. His eyes were upon the visage of his fast friend and pleasant associate in so many rare sports, with a disturbed and anxious expression; and, though all this time the sick boy had taken no manner of notice of his devotion, in consequence of not being sensible of his presence, he continued his vigilant watching, night and day, as though

he were as handsomely rewarded as his fidelity had so often been.

After this long disregard of him, it may easily be imagined with what feelings he heard himself recognized by the sick boy, and the exceeding comfort with which he returned to his place of watching: nevertheless, though he wore for a moment a look of infinite contentation, as he continued to gaze upon the features he loved so well, whereon the animation that had been given to them by the entrance of Master Shakespeare was rapidly disappearing, and they were assuming an aspect of the most terrible sort, it was easy to see the poor brute was getting fearfully anxious, and his look, no less strongly than his movements, bespoke the greatness of his distress.

This change in Hamnet had not been regarded by his fond parent; for his attention had been taken off his son by his weeping mother, who, with a total abandonment to sorrow, had thrown herself into his arms. Such passionate lamentations broke from her as soon as she could find her speech, that, though her husband strove with all the affection of better times to bring her to reason, it was to marvellous little profit.

To add to his trouble, at this trying moment, he found himself in a like manner called upon by the no less lively sorrow of a fair young girl who was with her, whom he could not fail of recognizing as his daughter Judith, the twin sister of his beloved Hamnet. He pressed both of them in his arms, and strove to console them with the best arguments at his commandment.

He looked about him as though he missed some one, and his gaze presently lighted upon the lovely countenance and graceful person of his elder daughter—the same who made the acquaintance of the courteous reader, at the dwelling of her kinsman, little Tommy Hart, in Stratford. She stood at some distance, with no other sign of grief in her than a most anxious countenance; regarding, with deep attention, the sallow visage of a little man in a threadbare suit—no other than the Stratford apothecary—who was in another part of the chamber, conversing with Master Bitfield; and it was easy to see, from the effect of his speech on the worthy vicar, that what he heard troubled him exceedingly.

Pothecary's stuff had done him no manner of good, and though he was nursed by his sister Susanna with untiring love and attention—his mother and Judith being so overpowered with their fears for him, as to be incapable of rendering any useful assistance in the sick chamber, it advantaged

him not at all. Susanna appeared the least moved at her brother's illness of any about him, but, young as she was, she saw the necessity of keeping her feelings under control, that she might the better be enabled to tend him with that care his case so much required. Therefore, had she been his careful nurse, never leaving the chamber, an never closing her eyes, from the first moment she had been made aware of the danger of the case.

Hearing her name called by her father, she hurried to receive his caresses, and returned them with a most devoted heart, though with as sorrowful a one as any present. She had been as anxious to receive them as her sister, but had stood aloof, that her brother might have all his attention, knowing how much he needed it. She now spoke not a word of lamentation; indeed, her young heart was too full for speech of any sort, but her straining embrace and tearful gaze touched her father more deeply than did the noisy grief that Judith and her mother continued. This was not the first time he had observed in her signs of a truly feminine nature—exceeding delicacy, the truest affectionateness, and the noblest self-denial—and these had endeared her to him exceedingly. The measure of her own affection for her father was of the prodigalest sort—the remembrances of his smiles and commendations feeding her love, till it took on it a strength marvellous at her early youth. It may, therefore, be conceived with what absolute affection they mingled their caresses at a time so trying.

But the intense gratification Susanna experienced whilst receiving such sweet proof of her father's love for her, could not for a moment render her forgetful of her beloved patient, whose features now getting of a deadly paleness, were for a very brief season enlivened with a faint smile, as he gazed on his father and sister; and she had just succeeded in drawing his attention to Hamnet, when the eyes of the sick scholar turned towards his revered master, who at that moment was directing towards him a glance of the terriblest distress and anxiety, and there seemed a meaning in them, which the good priest quickly interpreted, and as speedily sought to act upon.

He advanced to the bed with a solemn and distressed air, and knelt beside it. At this moment it was that Master Shakespeare looked again upon his son, and the terrible change his countenance had undergone in the last few minutes his attention had been taken off it, seemed to pierce his soul like a barbed arrow. He saw now he must hope

no more ; and, with an agony that appeared to be crushing both heart and brain, he fell on his knees, still clasping the little hand, that all this fearful time had rested so quietly in his own. The attention of the rest of the family was by this movement directed to the countenance of the dying boy, on seeing which his mother covered her face with her apron, and sunk in a swoon on the nearest chair, and Judith fell on her knees before her, hiding her face in her lap.

Susanna had softly and quickly made her way to the other side of the bed, where, kneeling down, with the remaining hand of her beloved brother clasped in both her own, she joined fervently in the fervent prayer Master Bifield had commenced. How moving was the scene the chamber of the sick scholar then presented ! There were on two or three shelves he had himself fixed on the panel, the books he had conned with such loving, yet such fatal diligence. It was as simple a chamber as scholar ever had, having nought in it but the truckle-bed whereon its poor occupant then lay, a small table at which he was wont to write and study, now having on it in divers vessels certain medicaments of the apothecary's compounding, and a chair whereon the child sat during his long studies.

The only casement it had looked into the orchard, where he had got many a task by heart, poring over it at the foot of a tree ; and the door opened into his mother's chamber, wherein were now several relations and friendly acquaintances, some of whom were peering in with grave and distressed visages. Hanging upon a peg was his satchel, and nigh it the gay cap and feather his fond father at his last visit had brought him for holiday wear. The rest of his apparelling had been neatly folded up by his good sister Susanna, and put away in a chest that stood at the furthest corner of the room, from which the apothecary had gone to take his hat and stick, seeing the case of his patient was now beyond all remedy, but, on hearing the solemn words of Master Bifield, he reverently bent his knees, and stayed where he was.

The countenance of that excellent good man was elevated, and bore the expression of a martyr passing from life to immortality, with a joyful hope that holdeth pain at defiance. The light fell full upon it, and the ravages that disease and care had made there were painfully visible. Yet, as with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, he implored the Divine custody for the spirit that was about to pass away, his passionate moving

eloquence appeared so to excite him, that to those who beheld him from the next chamber, he seemed to possess a greater degree of strength than they had seen in him for many years past.

Then with a still greater heartiness he prayed for forgiveness for the great sin he had committed by his negligence, and broke out in a confused passion of grief and self-condemnation, whereof the burthen was, he had sacrificed the sweetest excellent scholar master ever had, and thereupon the tears ran down his cheeks—the pitifullest sight eyes ever looked on—and, lastly, he finished his discourse with a like urgent appeal as that with which he had commenced it, dilating on the child's worthiness of Heaven, with such a power of language, that at last it became evident his feelings were overpowering him. He could only at intervals, and with a sort of frenzied earnestness, utter a few words of loving praise, which became fainter and fainter, till at last his head sunk on his hands, and he seemed to be continuing the prayer in silence, too exhausted for further speech.

There had been no other sounds during this discourse, but the sobbing of some of the women, and the laborious breathing of the sick boy. His look had been cast upward from the first moment Master Bifield's voice became audible ; as it grew interrupted, the breathing grew less distinct, and as the former ceased, there was heard in the deep silence that then reigned throughout the chamber, the horriblest of all sounds, *the death-rattle*. Master Shakspeare uttered a cry of agony, and took to be so frantic, three strong men were necessary to tear him from the chamber, and at the same instant, the faithful Talbot set up a long and piercing howl, which never left the remembrance of those who heard it.

Yet the saddest thing of all remains to be told. After the chamber had been cleared of the afflicted relatives, Master Bifield still remained in silent devotion, which, as might be supposed, none liked to disturb. At last the apothecary said something to one of Master Shakspeare's friends who was present. On this hint they both approached to where he knelt, and, not receiving any answer to certain words with which they addressed him, they each took him by the arm, and held back his head.

A long and wasting illness, followed by several days' violent exertion to both mind and body, had brought him to so low a state that the suffering and labor he had put himself to during those last few moments, had sufficed for the utter extinction of his feeble

life ; and, as it looked to those who witnessed, the master so honored, and the scholar so doted on, concluded their loving studies by taking their way to heaven hand in hand.

CHAPTER VIII.

We present men with the ugliness of their vices to make them the more to abhore them ; as the Persians use, who, above all sinnes loathing drunkennesse, accustomed in their solemn feasts to make their servants and captives extremely overcome with wines, and then call their children to view their nasty and loathsome behaviour, making them hate that sinne in themselves, which shewed so grosse and abominable in others.

AN APOLOGY FOR ACTORS.

WHETHER Dapple and Jack liked as little the neighborhood of the gipsy encampment as their riders, there is no knowing for a certainty ; but, judging by the unaccustomed pace at which these two goodly steeds went, and the extraordinary long time they continued it, there seemeth some grounds for so thinking. It may readily be imagined no effort was made to check their fleetness. In sooth, if ever horse and man were of one mind, the old grey and the youthful physician were, out of all doubt, and in this agreement of opinion they were closely copied by the stalwart serving-man and his rough, heavy-heeled colt.

They made so huge a clatter in the dead of the night, as to cause infinite alarm to some of the rustic sort of people whose habitations they passed by, divers of whom fell readily into the conceit that it could be no other than an army of bloodthirsty Spaniards intent on ravaging the whole kingdom. Others took it to be a rising of the Papists for the cutting of Protestant throats. A few were no less certain that it was no other than an army of thieving Scots ; whilst certain, who affected a greater wisdom, put it down to witchcraft, and shook in their beds for an hour after.

Whilst passing through one straggling hamlet, an alarm-bell was rung by the sexton, who happened to be returning from a roaring carouse with the parish clerk, at the neighboring sign of "The Foaming Tankard ;" and these worthies took their oaths on it, a few hours after, before the borough reeve and his equally frightened partners in authority, that they had witnessed a host of horsemen, nigh upon a thousand or two, dashing along with full speed, armed to the teeth, on the highroad to Lon-

don, which place, it was like enough, they intended surprising ; whereof, the consequence was, a hue and cry was presently despatched to the Privy Council, describing the appearance of the enemy in the most imposing array, and messengers sent to alarm the district for miles round, and take measures for its defence.

Perfectly unconscious of the sensation they were creating, the travellers continued their course ; their desire to place themselves out of the reach of Black Sampson occupying their thoughts, to the exclusion of all other things whatsoever ; and they did not begin to feel secure till, just as the day began to break, they rode into the yard of "The Golden Dragon," at Uxbridge.

A lame ostler was perceived, with the assistance of a lantern which he carried, grooming a horse. A heavily-laden waggon stood at the bottom of the yard, and divers goodly packages, with pack-saddles, and other stable-gear, lay about. Doubtless the whole inn was in as peaceable a state as ever inn was a minute since ; but, directly Dapple and Jack rushed clattering over the stones, all show of quiet was at an end.

Half a dozen carriers' dogs began barking and yelping, as though trying against each other the fierceness of their noise, and, presently after, out rushed their several masters at different doors, each with a lantern and a heavy cudgel, fearing nothing less than that their bales were being rifled. The shouting and uproar they made had the effect of bringing into the gallery which went round the yard, and at every one of the doors and casements, mine host and hostess, with all their guests and servants, with spits, guns, rapiers, and various other deadly arms—some but half-dressed, and others with nought on but what they were sleeping in—here and there one carrying a light, believing they were about to be robbed and murdered at the least. But, when the carriers held up their lanterns to the intruders, who were as much astonished at the strangeness of their reception as were the people of the inn alarmed by their sudden appearance, and saw in what peaceable guise they came, and, moreover, when they heard the chorus of loud laughter, and the various rude jests whiclh came from the carriers, as they observed the goodly specimens of horseflesh on which the travellers were mounted, they presently returned to their beds, assured of the safety both of their purses and their lives.

Simon Stockfish was by no means of a quarrelsome humor—perchance the perils his young master had already escaped im-

pressed the more deeply on his mind the necessity of keeping out of broils—so that, whilst John Hall, under the guidance of mine host, went his way into a comfortable chamber, the careful serving-man, unheeding the taunts that were levelled at his skill in horseflesh, proceeded to get his beasts the nourishment and repose they needed equally with their riders.

The young physician soon found himself discussing a pleasant meal, and relating to a circle of marvelling listeners of both sexes the strange adventure that had befallen him with the king of the gipsies. Thereupon arose amongst them much curious talk relating to Black Sampson and his comely leman; and many marvellous things were said of both, and the outlaws also, which greatly increased the astonishment Master Hall had experienced from the knowledge of them he had himself with so much peril obtained.

In the end, a soldier-sort of man, who had a patch over one eye, and a complexion like unto the bark of a tree, and whose pate was as bald as though it had just been cleanly shaved, though his grey beard was as ample as need be, promised the youthful traveller his protection on the remainder of his road, vowing, fore gad, he would make any villainous Rommance meat for dogs, who should venture to touch a hair of his head whilst in his company. This being said with a terrible fierce air, and a blow on the hilt of his rapier that sent the blade into the scabbard with a great noise, as the captain turned on his heel, and marched with imposing strides to his own chamber, was not without its due effect. Although this personage was a stranger to the travellers, he was none to the reader.

In the meanwhile, Simon Stockfish was doing his best for the comfort and convenience of Dapple and Jack, apparently prudently heedless of the sauciness of his rude associates. It may here be remembered that his having had his crown so recently cracked by his endeavoring to show his notions of what was most prudent and politic, had a wonderful influence towards shaking his opinion of the excellence of such notions, to say nought of the little good they had done the object for whose peculiar benefit and security they were entertained: therefore, he held his peace, as a secure means of offending none, and in no slight degree prided himself on the subtlety of such behavior.

Alack-a-day! such subtlety appeared to be poorly estimated by his unmannerly companions, who, enraged by what they

called his sullen humor, at hearing of their merry jests at his expense, one jostled him, and then another jostled him, and in a moment they all commenced pushing him violently from one to another, with a huge uproar of sportive shouts and cries, till there seemed no spot where he could be allowed to stand, and every bone in his body was as tender as an over-boiled chicken. Then a tall strapping fellow emptied upon him a huge bucket of water, and, after fixing the vessel on his head, the carriers, one and all, set up a loud horse-laugh, and led their several beasts, as quickly as they might, out of the inn-yard.

Poor Simon, soaked to the skin, and sore in every limb, whilst drying of his garments at the kitchen-fire, and breaking his long fast on the goodly meal provided for him, was sadly puzzled at the difficulty he found in behaving so as to scape harm, and was fast inclining to the conviction that he was living in a villainous world, where no honest serving-man could hope to exist with whole bones.

As the valiant personage alluded to in a preceding page intended leaving the Golden Dragon by nine of the clock that morning, that he might be in the good city of London at a convenient hour of the same day, for the transacting of a certain important business, with no less a person than the Lord Mayor, on which he was bound, our tired travellers were allowed a fair rest; and whilst one is sleeping in the chamber set apart for him, and the other is obtaining as sound a slumber stretched on a hard bench in the chimney-corner, methinks it will be an admirable opportunity for making this worthy better known to the courteous reader than he is, which cannot, in common policy, be let pass.

Titus Swashbuckler, sometime an ancient, above which dignity he never rose, notwithstanding it hath been his good pleasure nigh upon a score of years to be styled captain, was as well known in every ordinary in the city as the conduit in Eastcheap. How he lived was oft a mystery to many, but that he did live, and with very tolerable accommodations, the many who beheld him on his customary stool, in one or other of these houses of entertainment, eating and drinking evidently to his heart's content, were satisfied there was no manner of doubting.

Certes, his apparelling never looked to be of the newest, and his linen often showed a marvellous inclination for the buck-basket, but as he took on himself the character of a cast-captain, these signs were never regard-

ed as marvellous, and as he had the faculty of making himself agreeable to any one who seemed capable of paying his reckoning, and never attempted to offend such as looked in good odour with the rest of the company, he grew speedily to be as well liked as any one of his calling.

It is said that his principal source of subsistence was teaching the use of the rapier and dagger; for in Paul's Walk his bills might often be seen, offering to teach any kind of weapon, and challenging all comers at fence for a thousand crowns. Where he was to find a thousandth part of this sum was, six days out of seven, as complete a puzzle as ever was the sphinx to the learnèdest scholar in Christendom, but greater difficulties never troubled the valiant captain. His challenge was repeated as often as it got defaced and torn down; and as none of the celebrated swordsmen in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, to whom it was particularly directed, seemed desirous of obtaining the said handsome wager of him, he, doubtless very disconsolately, was forced to content himself with teaching the youth of London, for the trifling consideration of sixpence a lesson, those marvellous tricks of fence which had got for him so exceeding terrible a name, none dared enter the lists with him.

This teaching, therefore, was considered to be his chief means of living, though it had been noised abroad that the east-captain, whenever there was a likelihood of gain, would have recourse to numberless other arts in less credit with the world. He pretended to teach all the delicate mysteries of the duello, as practised in the first courts of Europe, and was ready, for a proper recompense, as had been the case with the unfortunate player, to be the second of any gentleman desirous of showing the most exact familiarity with these important observances: nay, if he had fitting remuneration, he would be glad to take up any man's quarrel, no matter how bad a cause he had.

Then, should any gallant want a blade of exceeding good repute, he would have one ready at your hand in a presently; one of a thousand, so sweet a temper, so rare an edge, neither Damascus nor Toledo had seen such choice metal; indeed, on his honor, it was given him in such a famous battle, by some great general of the enemy, whom the fortune of war had made his prisoner, and he would not part with it did he not estimate your worth and valour so highly. Thereupon he would ask, perchance, fifty gold pieces, swearing the whilst it was of inestimable value, and, noting your indiffer-

ence to purchase, would speedily bring down his demand to a matter of a few shillings, insisting on it he'd let you have it at so poor a price out of pure affection. Mayhap, you are at last induced to buy it, and in good time discover this matchless weapon to be as good a blade—for toasting cheese withal—as any you are like to meet with.

Such was Titus Swashbuckler, as he rode out of the yard of the Golden Dragon by the side of John Hall; after having, as a matter of especial favor, allowed his new acquaintance to pay his score of two shillings and eightpence, at the inn, protesting, very heartily, on the honor of a soldier, he had not so much as a doit in his purse, he having thoughtlessly, the night before, on being applied to, emptied its contents into the hat of a poor fellow, who had fought by his side at the taking of Cadiz, and was then in the utmost extremity of want.

As they jogged on together, the captain entertained his young companion with the most wonderful tales of battles and sieges; in the which nothing appeared so evident as the narrator's exceeding valor. Among other things, he stated how he had lost his eye, when with a few other daring spirits he was in the act of boarding a galleon in the Spanish main—a villainous Spaniard having thrust it out with a pipe—but, finding his listener did not enter into these spirit-stirring recollections with the interest he expected and desired, and did not show the least anxiety to become possessed of the incomparable weapon that had been the favorite rapier of no less a hero than Sir Philip Sidney, and had been presented by his widow to her deceased husband's brother in arms, Captain Titus Swashbuckler, at that hero's particular request in his dying moments, the valiant captain felt a wish to learn something more of his fellow-traveller than the little he at present knew, before he expended any more of his eloquence upon him.

Such an inclination was easily gratified, being directed upon one so candid and unsuspecting; and the young student of medicine, in a few words, told the valiant captain who he was, for what object he was travelling, and whither he was going.

"By this sword, this is strange indeed!" exclaimed the master of fence, with every appearance of excessive astonishment. "How exceeding fortunate it is that I have met you on your journey, Master Hall."

"Why so, good Captain?" inquired the youth.

"Fore George! if there be one man with whom I am more familiar than another, it is

mine estimable worthy friend Master Doctor Posset. Why, we are sworn brothers ! Many a gay carouse have we had together, I promise you; for the Doctor, i'faith, belongeth to the fraternity of jolly dogs, and doth the order no small credit."

The young student did not think this character any recommendation; for his opinion of what a skilful physician should be did not harmonize at all with the impression made by his companion's description of the man with whom he was about to commence a finishing course of study in medicine, previous to seeking a degree.

"I tell you, my worthy young Esculapius," continued the valiant captain, "you have met with especial good fortune in having made choice of so admirable proper an instructor. He is a rare fellow, this Doctor, and one in as absolute repute for his skill with the sick, as for his pleasantness with the hale. Many a bottle have we cracked together, and shall again as long as there shall be any virtue in good wine."

"Hath he many patients?" inquired John Hall, very coolly.

"By this sword, he hath such store of patients, I know not they who have not, at some time or other, sought to obtain benefit at his hands."

The young student began to feel more reconciled.

"You cannot help being wondrous content with your condition, my young friend," remarked the ancient. "You will find the Doctor such excellent company, and one so learned, withal, in the flavor of choice wine, you are not like to meet, search where you will."

"I do not much need such knowledge," answered the young physician, gravely; "and, methinks, a practitioner of physic ought to have studies of a very different sort."

"Fore George, well said!" cried the soldier, who was of so amiable a disposition, he never differed with a person on whose purse he had any design. "This same drinking must needs be of huge detriment to the proper study of medicine; and, for mine own part, I cannot believe one jot of what the idle world reports concerning the doctor's fondness for good wine. Indeed, this world is so villainously given to lying, it must needs be the safest policy never to believe a word one hears. On mine honor as a soldier, I take the doctor to care as little for wine, as the gravest physician of them all. He would scorn to take more than became him. But if you are not like

to meet temptations to intemperance, you will find in his house seductions less easily to be withstood."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the youth, in some alarm.

"Out of all doubt, Master Doctor!" cried the other, in a joyful tone. "This learned physician, let me tell you, hath a daughter just of an age, a form and countenance that would make a man's heart melt within him, were he ever so little given to the dear sex. And the little fiery god play not the very devil with you ere you have been a week under the same roof with her exquisite lustrous eyes, I am no master of fence."

"I care little for these things," quietly replied the student, on whom his mother's grave entreaties touching his behavior, which were almost the last words she spoke to him, now exercised their fullest influence.

The valiant captain stared with all his solitary eye. To meet with a young man for whom martial stories had no interest, wine no attraction, and who was indifferent to the charms of woman, seemed so extraordinary that he could scarce credit his senses. Believing that no good was to be got by exercising his talents upon such insensible materials, he was about to entertain the idea of getting rid of such unprofitable society, when the remembrance of the two-and-eightpence he had already pocketed induced him to continue his exertions.

"I doubt not you are a master of your weapon," observed the cast captain. "Nay, that warlike look and bearing you have with you telleth me you are as perfect a swordsman as any one of your years. Fore George, here is a pretty soldier spoiled!"

Now, John Hall had as little of the soldier in him as you might hope to find in an apple custard; and, instead of a warlike look and bearing, wore the peaceablest air possible.

"Perchance, you have killed your enemy now already," added his companion. "Heart o' me, I am sure on't!"

"In sooth, you misjudge me hugely," replied the student. "My vocation is to cure, not to kill; and so little do I know of the soldier's art, that I am as ignorant of the sword as the babe that hath not yet seen the light."

"This is strange indeed!" observed the captain, as though monstrously astonished. "As I live, I would not have believed a tittle of it, had you not told it me yourself. Why, how dost intend to live, sweet sir? A youth of your goodly appearance, that must needs associate with gallants of the court, and young citizens who are as familiar with their

weapons as with their toothpicks—why you cannot but be a lost man, know you not how to stand on your defence."

"I will take heed I give offence to none; then, of a surety, I must escape harm."

"Fore gad! such a thing was never known," added the master of fence, vehemently. "It be as necessary for a man to know his weapon as to know his alphabet; nay, in mine opinion, the weapon deserveth to be considered the most essential of the two, for with it a man shall not only be able to keep his life secre, but shall carve for himself a way to fortune, reputation, and his mistress' favor, which the extremest cunning in letters cannot effect."

The young student rode on, apparently but little interested in his companion's argument, but he offered no opposition to what he had just advanced.

"I will give you an instance, Master Esculapius," he continued, "of the exceeding importance of being skilled in noble swordmanship. When I was in Spain, with the forces of my very excellent good friend and admirable commander, the Earl of Essex, who with that valiant admirable Sir Walter Raleigh, the thrice noble Sir Philip Sidney, and in short nigh upon all our chiefest officers, had of me their well known cunning of fence, I was sent on a mission of importance, being considered one of the few fit to be employed on such high occasions, as much for my daring valor, as for my ripe experience in martial affairs. I was proceeding alone through the outskirts of Cadiz, intent on the performing of my mission with credit, when, as I turned the corner of a convent, I became aware of an ambuscade of villainous Spaniards—nigh upon a dozen—in sooth, I will not assert there were not thirteen—but they were the horriblest cut-throat dogs I had ever met. I promise you my rapier was in my hand in a second, and ere you could count one, I had stretched two of my assailants at my feet."

"Still your foes were too numerous for one man to combat with;" said John Hall, innocently. "Methinks there could be no great difficulty in some of them taking you from behind, whilst you were defending yourself in front."

"Under ordinary cireunstances, I grant you," readily returned the cast-captain. "But you should take into consideration my wonderful mastery of my weapon, which hath enabled me to triumph over all the most distinguished swordsmen from every part of the civilized globe, whom I have overcome by a secret stroke it is not possible

for any one to withstand, however great a master of fence he may be."

"I knew not that, valiant captain," observed the young physician, seemingly in some surprise.

"Fore George, I could have guessed as much!" replied the redoubtable Swashbuckler. "But to the telling of my tale. Such was the quickness of my eye, and the excellency of my guard, that my opponents could not touch me any one of them, and their numbers, by their jostling together, made them unable to defend themselves, as they otherwise might, against my quick and fatal thrusts. One by one they dropped around me, till three only were left, when, feeling somewhat tired by my great exertions in this unequal fight, I sought some mean or another of bringing the combat to a speedy close. And what think you, sweet sir, I did?"

"In sooth, I know not," said the student.

"This was it," answered the ancient, with a very commendable gravity. "I employed all the strategy of which I was master to set my assailants in a line, and then, sudden as a flash of lightning, with one terrible lunge, I pinned my three Spaniards against the wall."

"That was marvellous indeed!" exclaimed John Hall, with a tone and look of prodigious surprise.

"By this sword, I held them as easily as so many larks on a skewer," added the master of fence. "Now this sheweth how absolutely necessary it is for every one to have a perfect knowledge of his weapon. I must needs have the teaching of you, Master Hall. It must not be allowed that one who holdeth himself so handsomely, should be at the mercy of every lewd fellow, who chooseth to pick a quarrel with him. When you have so little chance with one, if you should be set upon by numbers, as was I, you would be cut to pieces presently."

"Methinks, I am little likely to be in such peril," said the youth, "seeing I am not a valiant captain like yourself, and, having no intention of voyaging to Spain, I must needs be safe from Spanish ambuscades."

"I doubt it not, Master Hall, I doubt it not;" quickly replied Swashbuckler. "But a man who hath not a proper degree of skill in the handling of his weapon, standeth no better chance in England than elsewhere. The highways are beset with villainous cut-purses—desperate unruly thieves, who get together in companies and despoil the traveler, both of his life, and of whatever he hath about him."

"Can skill with the sword avail the travel-

ler if these cut-purses be armed with pistolets?" inquired the young physician.

"Out of all doubt," answered the other, with as perfect a confidence as ever was seen. "If you will be taught, I will show how one may defend himself at any odds against such rascal fellows, and run every one through the body, by my infallible secret stroke, ere he have time to pull a trigger."

"I knew not the use of the sword could be made of such advantage," observed the young physician.

"Truly, there is no telling the marvel the skill I teach can be made to perform," gravely asserted the master of fence. "One fact is worth a volume of discourses. I have so often stretched these cut-purse villains in the dust, when they have set on me in a body, that, be they ever in such great numbers, they durst not come a near me. The last acquaintance I had of them was in Tot-hill Fields, when two sturdy knaves set on me with a sword and dagger, and two more took to their pistolets, seeking to get a sure aim. What think you I did in this strait?"

"It seemeth to me past telling," said the other.

"Like enough, good youth;" answered Swashbuckler. "I thought a long time how I could with great dexterity escape from these miscreants, and made use of a master-stroke of policy for that purpose."

"After what fashion, valiant captain?"

"This was the manner of it, Master Hall. I did so skip and so jump, and so dodge about, that they with the pistolets could get no aim at me, without putting their fellow rogues to imminent danger: so they all spread themselves to have at me, and were, as I could see, exceeding eager for my destruction. Seeing they with the pistolets right over-against each other, I gave them good opportunity for aiming, whilst I allowed the sword and dagger men, whom I had got in a like opposite situation, to prepare a fatal spring at me. Watching my time, on a sudden I jumped clean away from them. And what think you followed?"

"Perchance, they made after you."

"Fore George, they were in no case for moving a step! The sword and dagger men fell thrust through by each other's hands at the same moment of time they with the pistolets shot each other through the head."

"As I live, a most strange thing!" exclaimed the youth very much astonished.

"But what sort of company have we here?" he added, pointing to some men who seemed to be making towards them in the direction they were proceeding: "now, if they chance to be cut-purses, valiant cap-

tain, methinks they had best away with themselves as they are wont to do at the sight of you, as quick as they can—else your exceeding skill with your weapon must needs be their entire destruction."

Captain Swashbuckler at this directed his gaze where he was required, and, after a few minutes sharp scrutiny, suddenly put spurs to his horse and turned at full speed down a bye lane; but whilst John Hall was marvelling at this strange behavior, he noticed the men who were approaching quickening their pace towards him, and seeing they were armed and of a very vagrant-like appearance, he looked to his weapons. As they rushed towards him with threatenings and imprecations, he had just time to be on his guard, and, one of the villains attempting to seize his bridle, he let fly at him presently, and, doubtless wounded him, for he fell back into the arms of one of his associates.

It was evident that neither Dapple nor Jack had ever so slight an acquaintance with the munitions of war, for, as in a previous instance of a similar sort, on the instant they heard the report of the pistolet, they started off with a desperateness that rendered futile all attempts on the part of the cut-purses to lay a hold on their riders; the old horse giving one of the rascals so sharp a kick as sent him to the ground, yelling like a dog that hath got his tail jammed in a door-way.

Simon Stockfish had not passed unprofitably the time taken up by the discourse of his master with the east-captain. He had been thinking with a wondrous intentness on the best means of securing his young master's safety till he got him securely housed in the dwelling of the famous Doctor Posset, in Barbican; after imagining all sorts of evils it was possible for him to meet during the remainder of his journey, and every possible kind of remedy for one and all of them, he had just come to the sage conclusion, founded on the little profit he had got, of the ability to help him in his need, that it would be discreetest to let things take their course, when the firing of the pistolet and the uncontrollable fury of his steed put an end to his reflections. For some time, he had quite enough to do to endeavor to keep his seat, and probably this inability to interfere secured his master's safety and his own.

They pursued the rest of the way without any adventure worth naming; not, however, without Dapple and Jack creating a vast deal of attention wherever they appeared; and, after some difficulty, the young physician found out the place of his destination. Those goodly steeds were at once sent to proper stables, that they might have a suffi-

cient rest previous to their return to their owners the next day, in the careful custody of Simon Stockfish.

John Hall was so fortunate as to meet his instructor in the art and mystery of medicine, within a few doors of his dwelling. Dr. Posset appeared to be a little man, of a lively temperament, having grey hair, growing very thin, carefully curled; his short beard being looked after with equal affection. His eyebrows were very thick, and jutting out exceedingly, under which were a pair of keen, hawk-like eyes. A thick and misshapen nose, and a mouth of a moderate size, drawn in by loss of teeth, completed the list of his principal features. His dress was a sober suit of plum-colored cloth, with falling band and ruffles; hose of the same color; a velvet cap, without a feather; and square-toed shoes, without roses; and these, with a long staff in his hand, tipped with ivory, made up the distinguishing marks of his apparelling.

On first spying him, Dr. Posset, as though in no manner of doubt as to his man, gave him a hearty welcome, inquired after his good mother, and how he had borne the journey, and hoped they should be excellent friends, and that the youth might find with him as pleasant a home as the one he had left.

The house wherein the student was about to find a dwelling seemed to him a fair edifice, though bearing an antique and somewhat gloomy aspect. The chambers above the ground floor projected into the street, and much rude carving was observable round the door and over the lower casement; a rude figure representing the goddess Hygeia, carved in oak, was displayed at full length, with all her proper attributes, in a prominent place above the door; whilst a head of Galen, in monstrous dingy colors, was slung in an iron frame in front of it. Above the front story projected another, with much the same sort of wide casements, all black with time and weather stains; and in the shelving roof, there seemed to be one or two more, though of a much smaller sort.

The houses adjoining were of the same respectable sort, belonging to persons of substance and credit, most of them having some sort of sign to distinguish the calling of the tenant; and, as bravely-apparelled gallants, discreet gentlewomen, and citizens of fair repute, were seen going in and out of them, there could be no manner of doubt but that Barbican was a place peopled by thriving and respectable citizens.

John Hall followed his conductor through the door, which he opened with a latch, and

found himself in a capacious hall, having chambers to the right and left, distinguishable by the open doors which led into them; and there was a staircase at the further end, the lower part being seen through another open door at the left, corresponding with a closed door, or rather wicket, at the right, formed in an oaken partition of some eight or ten feet high; the upper part of the staircase being visible above it; the wicket leading to the back premises, and the other door to the chambers above.

John Hall had scarcely time to notice these particulars, when his attention became completely engrossed by a number of persons grouped about the foot of the stairs. Stretched at her full length on the steps, her head supported in the lap of an elderly female of a monstrous sharp visage, a younger one sitting at her feet, whilst a stout youth had firm possession of her arms, lay a girl, evidently just entering upon her career of womanhood.

She appeared rather of a tall stature, with limbs somewhat large, though by no means ungraceful, well-rounded arms and bust, being in a low, tight bodice, were at least sure of being regarded admiringly; and her dainty farthingale disclosed sufficient of her ankles to prove they were no less commendable. Her features bespoke nothing of a singular comeliness, but they were seen to no sort of advantage, the eyes being fixed, the nostrils dilated, the mouth opening and shutting as though with sudden spasms, and the complexion pallid, whilst the abundance of her glossy hair strayed in confusion over her forehead and shoulders.

She made a strange mumbling sound, and threw out her arms by sudden starts, which he who grasped them—albeit he did not seem to lack strength—had much ado to keep under his commandment. Anon she would strive to overthrow those who held her, by some prodigious effort of strength, which it was with exceeding difficulty they could withstand; and failing in this, burst out into a monstrous passion of laughter so long and loud, it was as though all Pandemonium were moved by some devilish jest; and, after this, straightway commenced talking eagerly the strangest stuff ever heard, the which was only brought to an ending by a sudden and mighty dashing of herself as though to escape, which was soon followed by another wild scream of laughter more fierce than ever.

Near her stood one with a vessel of water, which was being sprinkled on her face, whilst another held burnt feathers to her nose, and a third was approaching with

some kind of medicine in a glass. Other remedies were suggested by her distressed companions, but she minded them none at all, for she struggled, and screamed, and gabbled, and laughed with increasing fury.

Whilst John Hall gazed on this scene with the most absolute astonishment, it seemed to fill his conductor with nothing but vexation, for he spoke impatiently, now wringing his hands and casting up his eyes, and anon pacing up and down with his hands behind him.

All at once she seemed to be in a less tearing humor. At this the young man bent his head near the ear of the sick girl, and, whispering with an impressing earnestness, as though calling to her, the name of "Millicent." He had scarce done so, when she replied, in a faint and languid voice, and thereupon commenced a dialogue between the two, the one asking how she felt, and what she would have done for her; and the other answering she was better, and desired nothing so much as to be taken to her chamber.

Preparations were soon made for carrying her wishes into effect, the youth seeming to take nearly all the burthen of her conveyance upon himself.

It was easy to guess that the sick girl was the physician's daughter; the elder female was a neighbor, following the trade of a capper, in Golden Lane; the other was a young friend; the youth was an apprentice to Dr. Posset of more than a year's standing; and the others were certain acquaintances of the physician's—neighbors and gossips—invited by him, to welcome amongst them the young scholar, whose studies he was about to superintend.

As the young physician watched the retreating form of the fair Millicent up the stairs, was he recalling the seductive character of the one who was about to be his near associate for a long period, which he had heard from the estimable Captain Swashbuckler? It did not recur to his mind, for a single moment. He thought only of what was writ in a certain part of Galen on the subject of epilepsy.

CHAPTER IX.

You neede not goe abroade to bee tempted :
you shall bee intised at your own windowes.
The best counsell that I can give you is to keepe
at home, and shun all occasion of ill speech.

THE SCHOOLE OF ABUSE.

WE may not tarry with the bereaved fath-

er longer than will suffice for the reader's proper understanding of his unutterable sorrow. By the death of his so deeply beloved son, Master Shakspeare's heart was smote as though the king of terrors had dealt therein his fiercest dart. He recovered so far as to follow to its last resting-place all that remained of the form which had so long been the chiefest object in every ambitious dream, with a seeming marvellous calm and patience; but when he heard the clods of earth rattle against the little coffin, there rushed into his mind so vast a sense of the sunless love there buried and lost for ever, that his oppressed brain could not bear the burden of it, and he straightway fell into such a passionate frenzy, it was with a monstrous to do he could be got home; and only with many strong men's help, day and night, could he be kept to his chamber. How wildly he raved; how piercingly he called on the remorseless tomb to give up its youthful tenant; how fiercely he waged war on divers shadowy powers, which, in his fantasy, kept from him his heart's best treasure; and how urgently he prayed to what seemed to him the unnatural callous natures that set at nought a father's agony, and could not be moved by a father's love—it passeth the skill of my rude pen to say. Perchance, of those whose eyes wander over these pages, there shall be some whose affections have been uprooted after the rude fashion which marked the love of this noble gentleman for his sweet Hamnet, and can readily conceive the manifold workings of so terrible tempestuous an earthquake of the heart; but, doubtless, there shall be many who know nothing of these things. God keep them, to their lives' end, in so proper an ignorance!

We must, however, state that, partly from the sympathy which this huge affliction created for miles round, now directed to the promising scholar, anon to the diligent and well-pleased master, and then to the doting father, and, from the respect felt generally for one of such blameless life as the deceased vicar, and for one of so many admirable qualities as William Shakspeare, there was at the funeral so numerous an assemblage as had never been known before to have congregated on such an occasion.

Not only did the gentry of the neighborhood attend, but every one of the corporation of Stratford, from the high bailiff to the humblest of the burgesses, with every proper sign of mourning, joined in the melancholy procession. Honored with the sincere regrets of rich and poor, and such a bountiful

store of tears from man, woman, and child, as though their deaths were regarded as a public calamity, they, who had been so long and intimately connected by a mutual love of learning, were on the same day consigned to their narrow homes. Though it may be said of them, that they brought their studies to a most sorry ending—that their eager pursuit of wisdom led them only to that unmatched dreary state where alone wisdom hath no privilege—who shall aver that, in those groves of everlasting verdure, which hath in so many good men's minds been considered the abiding-place of all intelligent spirits that have passed away from this lower world, that diligent and affectionate scholar is not at this very moment of time enjoying the inestimable lessons of the master by whom he was so truly loved?

It was long after the churchyard was deserted, when every one of that goodly assemblage by whom it had been filled were in their own more enviable homes, reflecting on the affliction that had visited the cottage at Shottery, one mourner still lingered about the grave of Hamnet Shakspeare. It was Talbot.

The poor hound had managed to escape from the outhouse—where, since the death of his young playmate, he had been carefully yet kindly confined—by taking advantage of the absence at the funeral of the affectionate creature who had shewn such friendly heed of him. Talbot never failed to recognize the attentions and caresses of the gentle Susanna, but the food she brought was left untouched, and the tears with which the sorrowing girl mingled her persuasions to take the tempting morsels she put before him elicited no other sign of his attention than an uneasy whine.

By what singular instinct it was, on breaking from his bonds and displacing a loose board, he made direct for the churchyard, cannot be explained any more than his immediately selecting the exact spot beneath which lay all that remained of one with whom he had had such heaps of pleasant sport. A short time after he was discovered howling the piercingest tones ever heard, whilst making prodigious efforts to tear up the soil that rested on Hamnet's coffin. To drive him or coax him out of the churchyard was found impossible, till Susanna, having discovered his escape, on her proceeding at her return home to tempt him once more with some nice morsel, hurried in search of him, and, with infinite trouble, at last succeeded in getting him away.

It was only by the constant care and exquisite loving kindness of this gentle girl that the

life of the poor hound was saved. For a long time Talbot looked but the skeleton of what he was. Deeply must he have grieved for the loss of his fast friend and playmate. He never again ventured near the churchyard; but, when allowed to wander where he chose, he would take every possible pains to avoid it. And, after the lapse of many months, having accompanied some of the family in that direction, he stopped at one of the gates, and set up so pitiful a howl, it moved all who saw him.

Advancing somewhat in time, it must now be stated, that, stretched on a bed in a chamber, the which may readily be recognized as the one in which young Hamnet died, although it had since seen divers alterations, lay the heart-broken father, slowly recovering from the moral and physical effects of the fatal blow at his happiness he had so unexpectedly received. His eyes were open, and, though dimmed by sorrow and long sickness, still shone with that fine spirit whereby so many worthy actions of his had been influenced: his face was exceeding pale and much wasted; but the benevolence that might be read in its expression, like a written language, was as visible as ever; and the intelligence that spoke as intelligibly from his noble forehead as though it were the powerfulest eloquence ever heard, was such as neither grief nor illness had any power over.

He gazed about him somewhat strangely, leaning his head upon his hand, perchance for obtaining a better survey of his chamber, and his eyes wandered over all its objects, but could not be said to rest on any, till it fell upon a plot of pansies that grew in a box outside the open casement; and were then in full bloom. A yellow butterfly—that common sign of summer and sunshine—was hovering over the pretty blossoms, on which it presently descended.

These familiar shapes, that speak, too, so cheerfully of life and its most exquisite sources of enjoyment, did not present themselves to the mind of the sick man without bearing with them those marvellous lessons with which Nature, in her exceeding love, refreshes the weary and heals the wounded spirit. Though the goodliest edifice that doting affection ever raised out of the most excusable feelings of pride and ambition had been overthrown to its very foundations, and the poor architect stood overwhelmed and stunned with the completeness of his ruin, scarce had he recovered the faculty of seeing, when he became sensible that life had still hopes, and Nature bounties, and with such help more secure fabrics might be built

up of nearly as fair proportions and lofty elevation.

As he continued his gaze on the pansies, Master Shakspeare's thoughts fell out of that disordered state in which they had so long been left to wander, and gradually grew into a wholesome regularity. That they led him to the pleasant mossy banks, and the sweet shady nooks where, in times past, he had first sought to indulge that sympathy for the beautiful which had linked so indissolubly all his exquisitest feeling to nature, can be no marvel; that they convinced him that all the enjoyments sought by him out of the wide range of unrivalled pleasures she offers to such as devote themselves to her service, were not only profitless, but deeply mischievous, is likewise no more than natural: and that, at last, they directed him for the future to place his whole reliance on those means of happiness still at his disposal, as having in this pursuit neither vexation nor trouble of any sort whatever, is the probablest thing that could be thought of.

Whether this happened or not, certain it is that a more cheerful aspect took possession of the sick man's features. He seemed, by some effort of his will, to lift his mind from the earth, and, extricating it from the fearful wreck which death had made of his affections, elevate it on those proud aspirations which had so often borne it out of sight of base earthly things. Then it was that the fluttering insect rose from its flowery resting-place beside the casement, and soared into the air, rising gradually before the sick man's eyes, till it had gone out of sight, as though aiming at the very highest heaven.

Whilst pondering on this apparent promise, Master Shakspeare was aware of a door opening, and with a step so soft, she seemed to be treading on the very air, and a look of deep interest, that gave but another gentle touch to the gentle expression of her beauty, Susanna entered the chamber. At the first glimpse he had of her he recognized the graceful form that had been wont to present itself in so many affectionate ways to his bewildered senses, but he could not have known the admirable attentive nurse she had been.

It was marvellous to behold the exceeding care with which the fond girl had watched over her parent throughout his terrible malady; of a truth, he owed his recovery to her patient and unceasing regard of him. A conviction of such an obligation entered his mind as she carefully approached the bed, and with it came the consoling thought, so much love would go far to replace the monstrous loss he had sustained.

As she took note of the improvement so visible in her patient's appearance, she smiled in such sort as plainly proved how greatly it was to her contentation. The father unclosed his eyes—which he had shut at his child's approach—and the affectionate joy that shone so brightly in her sweet countenance had so powerful an effect on him, that he presently threw his arms round her, and pressed her in a fond embrace. Although Susanna was somewhat taken by surprise, the endearing expressions she heard soon assured her, and she speedily gave herself up to the full enjoyment of those delicious moments.

To be loved was all her gentle nature desired, but had hitherto desired in vain. Her mother's affection was fixed exclusively upon her sister. Judith appeared to love no one, not even her too indulgent mother. Hamnet's whole soul was engrossed by his books, and her father, though always kind, seemed to have no affection to spare out of the heap he lavished on her brother. Failing in these quarters, she had strove hard to endear herself to Talbot, but the heart of the noble hound was so entirely that of his playfellow, that she found her exertions to win him to herself were fruitless. Disappointed though she was in her desires, it made not the slightest change in her disposition; whilst every one seemed cold and careless to her, she was gentle and kind to all.

It may, therefore, be imagined, that the pleasure with which she received the caresses of her father was of as perfect a sort as ever existed. She had not dared to hope to be made so happy. Indeed, she had almost despaired in her pursuit, knowing how little was to be expected from her mother and sister, and believing her father's affections to be buried in the coffin of his beloved Hamnet. But the conversation by which the well-pleased parent now skilfully brought out his daughter's disposition, assured her, by the commendation of her it elicited, that there was at least one heart in the world whose love she might obtain.

After this he mended fast, and bid fair to be a whole man again speedily; which, to be sure, was in a great measure owing to the loving care and heedfulness of his daughter Susanna—the only one in the house who troubled herself about him in any way worthy of notice. To be sure, her mother did, at times, pay him some attentions, and Judith would stay with him awhile when there was no great temptation to entice her away; but to a heart such as his, affection of this sort gave him anything but satisfaction.

It was about a week or so after this colloquy, that three old dames, each equally short of stature and stout of flesh, with visages alike in the marvellous fieryness that shone in them, like so many yulelogs in a blaze, and a similar showiness in their several apparelling, sat in the kitchen of the cottage at Shottery, as though they had just come in, and were intent on resting themselves after a walk. These were near relatives of Master Shakspere's wife; three sisters, somewhat notorious for causing strife wherever they went.

Susanna was making bread at a goodly sized dough-trough on one side of the chamber, standing on a stool the while, and her mother and sister were tiring of themselves as though about going on a journey. But though the old dames were resting their limbs, their tongues got no rest, I promise you; nay, it more than once chanced, they all talked together, and so fast withal, it looked as though they had each got so much to say. Aunt Prateapace in especial, and so little time to give it utterance, all must needs out at once. In this chorus they were, ever and anon, joined by the mother and daughter, Susanna alone holding her peace; and she, too, continuing her labors apparently as little regarded of the rest as though she were a good thousand miles away.

"By my halidom, Anne, an I had a husband, I'd see him hanged ere I would be plagued by his humors!" said she in the yellow bodice with a crimson kirtle, tossing up her pincushion nose in a monstrous disdainful manner, as though she had smelt carrion. "A fine thing, truly, for a poor woman to be the slave of every tyrannical tearing fellow it may be her ill hap to have married! It is fit a wife should have her recreations and her pleasures, and have ever about her those who are her true friends and gossips, and engage in all manner of sports and revels she can get to; and in no case is it proper for her to be kept to her home like a rat in a trap, making herself a worthless, pitiful, poor drudge from day to day, and from year's end to year's end. All saints' days and holidays, and all manner of festivals and merrymakings, she ought to enjoy to her heart's content; and, if any pragmatical, peremptory husband sought to prevent it, she should value him no more than a cracked flea—that's *my thinking*," and the old dame laid an emphasis on her last words, slapped her closed fist against her open palm, and, looking as fierce as a ferret, turned short round on her stool towards her associates, as though there could be no appeal to so famous an argument.

"Truly, Aunt Gadabout, we poor women are hardly used," observed the still fair Anne, eyeing her comely features complacently in a small mirror she held in her hand—an observation they had heard from her when on the same subject any time this dozen years.

"Hardly used, quotha?" mumbled another, as, with her hands resting on her knees, and her body bending forward on the settle where she sat, she shook her head, as though it was took with a sudden ague. "Had Peter Prateapace ventured on such unbearableness, I'd a used him, i' faith!"

"Now it should be known that the said Peter, whilst he was in the flesh, would as soon have ventured on taking on himself the very slightest appearance of a husband, as of claiming kin with the Pope. It so chanced, however, that once having grown valiant by sitting over-late at his cups, with a noted scowler of scolds and termagant shrews, he came home, and dared to bid his wife bring him a pot of small ale, and, on her refusing, bade her go hang for a jade. The next morning, on his coming to his sober senses, the consequences looked so terrible, he went and incontinently drowned himself in the mill-stream.

"Hardly used, quotha?" she continued, in the same triumphant strain. "Lord warrant us! an all women had my will, Anne, they should follow their own humors with such infinite perfectness, they should have nothing to wish for in that matter, and snap their fingers on all men whatsoever. By'r lady! methinks 'tis a good thing for wives to be held in subjection of their husbands—to be thwarted, and vexed, and put upon as though they were fit for nought but to bear fardels enough to break their backs, whilst, forsooth, their precious helpmates are to look on and find fault. Were the best man that ever wore a head to attempt ordering of me, or interfering with my pleasures, ere he were a day, an hour, a minute older, an his face were not as well scratched as though it had been thrust through a bramble-bush, it should be a marvel indeed, I promise you—I warrant he should be in no mood for a second attempt of the sort."

"But I have such an infinite lack of spirits," added Anne, "and am so weak and fearful withal, such violent courses would only succeed in doing me a mischief."

"Alack, poor lamb!" cried the other, in a commiserating mood. "But this is the real grounds of it all. Were she not of such poor health, she would be more kindly used, but he taketh advantage of her weakness to treat her scurvy. I never could affect the fellow. He was ever a proud, bombastical,

fustian knave. I protest I liked him not from the first hour I saw him ; and, since he hath been a player—save the mark—he hath become so intolerable fantastical and indifferent, and putteth on himself so monstrous nice a behavior, and so smooth a discourse, I would as lief lie in a butter-woman's basket as within earshot of him."

Susanna heard this disparagement of one whom her young heart regarded as the kindest and best of human beings, with pain ;—but she said never a word, continuing kneading of the dough as though she had no interest in the discourse—even her mother seemed to like not such plain speaking.

" Nay, Aunt Breedbate, you do him wrong," she said, " I have seen no such behavior in him."

" Ah, child ! I warrant me there is a good deal thou hast not seen of his goings on," replied the old dame, with an air of exceeding mystery. " Wished I to speak, I could say something on that matter marvellously to the purpose ; but I am not like to cause mischief betwixt man and wife. To be sure, it is said, ' What God hath joined let no man put asunder,' which hath no allusion of any sort to women, so they may be left to do as they please in it. Nevertheless, I am so great an enemy to evil speaking, I hate any one who cannot keep what they know of another's ill deeds to themselves. Monstrous mischiefs have come of the idle employment of slanderous tongues, and the fair fame of the best are at the mercy of such. For mine own part, ere I would take to speaking ill of any one, albeit, though he were as villainous as a Jew, and there should be no other subject for speech, I would be dumb for a week. Therefore, the horrible wickedness your notable fine husband has fallen into must go untold for me."

" What horrible wickedness hath he done, Aunt ?" inquired Anne, in a tone of alarm. " Prythee, let me know it. Nay, I will not stir a step till I have heard it all."

" 'Tis but sailor's news, child," observed Aunt Gadabout, consolingly. " Knewest thou men as truly as do I, thou wouldest marvel at no news of this sort, were it ever so black. There is no treachery they will not act to the spoiling of us poor women—there is no injury they will not do against us. One and all, they are a vile, abominable, uncivil, abandoned set of profligate monsters and wretches—that's my thinking," and again the old woman twisted herself half round her seat with a slap against her palm, and a look that conveyed in it her conviction that what she had stated there could be no gainsaying.

" But I must and will know what he hath done amiss," exclaimed Anne, determinedly—a mood by no means unusual to her.

" What matters it ?" cried the relict of Peter Prateapace, as she again poked her body forward, and commenced shaking of her head with an air of wondrous meaning. " Be assured, Anne, that there never yet was any thing done by our precious partners worth a woman troubling her head about. I warrant you they know better than to be doing of any mischief. Marry, an any such essayed to play his tricks upon me, I would so maul him he should not know whether he stood on his head or his heels for the rest of his days."

" A plague on you all !" cried Anne, vehemently. " Tell me, on the instant, what hath been done, or I will have no more to say to either of you from this hour." Thereupon in her passion she tore her dress, after several idle attempts to make it please her. Susanna still continued intent on her bread-making, but she was terribly ill at ease.

" Well, if I am so commanded, I cannot get off saying it," observed Aunt Breedbate, with a look of as absolute indifference as ever was seen. " But it must on no account be bruited that you had your intelligence from me, for I would not have it thought I could speak ill of any one for mines of wealth. Though I like him so little, I should be loath to set you against him. For my own part," she added, with a marked emphasis, " I hate meddling and mischief-making."

" Marry, yes, and so do other folk, Sister Breedbate, quite as much," observed Aunt Prateapace, rather sharply.

" Sister Prateapace," exclaimed the other, evidently taking some offence at the interruption, and regarding the interrupter with a monstrous severe look.

" Ay, I maintain it !" cried Sister Prateapace, so little abashed as to meet the gaze with one of a like severity. " I hate meddling—perchance, a wondrous deal more than they who are ever a boasting of their misliking it, and yet all their lives long are in the constant humor of meddling."

" Why, thou slanderous jade thou, how darest thou affirm I am in a constant humor of meddling ?" screamed Sister Breedbate, her red face turning purple. Here seemed a great likelihood of quarrelling betwixt the two sisters ; nevertheless, no one interfered. In truth, these squabbles were such everyday matters betwixt these two, that had they met without disputing, it would have been accounted a marvel.

" Prythee hold thy peace, Sister Prateapace !" said Aunt Gadabout, turning round

towards her, with a sour visage. "Thou art ever making words." Sister Gadabout, whenever these squabbles took place, was famous for sitting still, and ever and anon saying something to one or other, which addeded exceedingly to the existing ill feeling betwixt them. "Mayhap, this was as pleasing to her as was the constant quarrelling agreeable to the other two; for, it cannot be imagined, they would take so much trouble to find a cause of strife, preferred they a more peaceable living. "I know not, in this world," continued she, "one of so cursed a temper."

"Cursed enough, truly!" added Aunt Breedbate. "Heaven preserve me from such shrewishness, say I!"

"So said Goodman Breedbate a week after his marriage, when he could no longer abide the horrible misery he had fallen into," replied Aunt Prateapace, with a familiar nod of her head to her angry sister. "Doubtless, since his precious helpmate drove him away from his home, by her intolerably violent tongue—forty year come Lammas—he hath had no inclination to return, and have more of it. Truly, he hath had a blessed escape!"

"Blessed escape, quotha!" cried the other, scarce able to speak, she was in so deadly a rage. "Methinks thou hast had a blessed escape of the hangman. It is not all wives who push their husbands into mill-streams, who are so fortunate."

"I marvel, Sister Breedbate, thou shouldst utter so horrible a slander," exclaimed Aunt Gadabout, turning as sharply to her as she had a minute since, to the other. "Of all villainous traducers, thou art surely the worst."

"There cannot be a doubt of it," said the widow of Peter Prateapace, as coolly as you please. "But as it is in her nature, it cannot well be helped. Nevertheless, it is greatly to be lamented she should be so intent on mischief as to injure her nearest of kin, rather than refrain from evil speaking. If she must needs have some villainy to talk of, I doubt not she would find enough for her complete contention in certain scandalous proceedings that took place, I know not how many years since, wherein one Barnaby Rackstraw, a club-footed thatcher, of no great repute, from Wilmington, was engaged with a notable shrew, well known in these parts, who drove her husband from his home, and—"

"Why, thou horrible malefactor, thou!" screamed the other, jumping off her seat as though bitten sharply by some hungry cur, and shaking her clenched fist so furiously, it

seemed like to loosen her knuckles for the next month to come. "Dost dare to say such monstrous things of me. Had I been as familiar with Barnaby Rackstraw as wert thou with Ephraim Clods, the one-eyed delver—"

"Ephraim Clods!" observed her sister, like one who is striving to recollect something. "Ah! I remember me. The poor man hath been dead this thirty year. A worthy soul and an honest. He liked a race of ginger in his ale as well as ere a man in Warwickshire, and was smothered by the falling of the earth when he was digging a well for Sir Hugh Clopton, at the New Place. What of him, good sister?"

"What of him!" cried Aunt Breedbate, getting more passionate from observing the other's composedness. "What, is it not notorious—"

"His one eye?" inquired Aunt Prateapace. "I' faith, yes. It was almost as much talked of as a certain club-foot after it had been seen in the grey of the morning—"

What further scandal might have been said cannot now with any accurateness be ascertained, for a stop was suddenly put to this sharp speech, and to the sharp reply which it was easy to see was on the point of breaking forth, by the opening of the door, and the appearance there of a noble-looking, soldier-like gentleman, very bravely appareled. He seemed to have passed the best of his years—his hair and beard being plentifully sprinkled with those tokens of age to which the rich are subject equally with the poor. Nevertheless, his eyes had a merry, wanton twinkle in them, which, with the careless expression of his fine mouth, and somewhat prominent nose, showed such tokens gave him no manner of uneasiness.—His visage was of a fresh, sanguine complexion, and wrinkled somewhat—but of all doubt belonging more to the court-gallant than to the country gentleman—the which looked more apparent when the observer regarded his goodly hat and feather, with a jewel set in it of the last fashion; his handsome doublet, and rich satin trunks, with other bravery of a like sort, not forgetting the very soldier-like quality of his rapier and dagger.

In his company was a fair youth, of some sixteen or seventeen years, nearly as tall as he, and quite as bravely clad. Nevertheless, though so young, his look lacked the bashfulness and ingenuousness which are wont to be seen in a youthful face.

"With your leave, mistress!" cried the elder, very gallantly, as he stepped up to

Anne, then fully equipped for her journey, and gave her a right courtly salute.

"With your leave, mistress!" cried the younger, quite as gallantly stepping up to Susanna, and favoring her in a like manner.

"By Ovid, mistress, thy lips are very sugar!" exclaimed the old gallant, in a seeming passionate manner.

"Worthy Sir George, I am much bounden to you," respectfully replied Anne, with her best courtesy. Thereupon the knight proceeded, with the same courteous manner, to salute her three aunts, who were standing up, all smiles and courtesies, striving as hard as they might to look as innocent as so many lambkins; and, at the compliments Sir George uttered, dropping a courtesy to the ground, and each, as simple as a maid, spoke her thanks.

"By mine own captive heart, mistress, there is no honey like to those most ravishing sweet lips!" exclaimed the young gallant. The gentle Susanna, however, took not her salute as quietly as did her mother. Her face and neck were presently the hue of the rosiest flower eye ever beheld; and, instead of acknowledging the compliment in some simple maidenly phrase, she stood as if ready to sink into the ground with shamefulness, and fixed her beautiful, fair eyes on her taper fingers as though the flour which clung to them was some villainous thing or another that might witness against her very disparagingly.

"What, Cousin Hugh!—art planet-struck?" cried Sir George, slapping the youth on the back, as he approached the abashed maiden, doubtless with the intent of behaving to her in the same courtly fashion as he had used to the others. "I' faith, but methinks thou hast good cause for it," added he, gazing on her blushing beauties with no less admiration than had his young cousin; then, addressing her with more show of sincerity than he had employed towards the others, he continued, "I pray you suffer an old soldier, who hath just returned from a long and arduous service amongst barbarous Irish kerns and gallow-glasses, as a fit recompense for all the dangers he hath passed, to taste so tempting a cate as that most delicate rosy mouth." Thereupon the knight drew Susanna towards him, and, stooping down as he took off his jewelled hat, saluted her with as great an air of respect as she had been the daughter of a sovereign prince.

"And who is this tercel gentle?" inquired Sir George.

"An it please you, Sir George, she is no

other than mine own daughter," replied Anne.

"What, a child of my excellent worthy friend Will?" asked he, turning to her again with a pleased astonishment.

"Indeed is she, an it please your lordship's goodness," said Aunt Prateapace, bustling forward with some officiousness; "which cannot be gainsay'd of any man, gentle or simple, seeing they be as like as are two peas in the same pod."

"He must needs be a marvellous happy man," observed the knight.

"Ay, that is he, I'll be bound," here put in Aunt Gadabout with some eagerness.—"Your honorable worship doth not know the happiness he hath. I' faith, he shall be as happy as a sand-boy, an it will be your worship's desire."

"Truly, my good dame," answered Sir George, "if he be as happy as he deserves to be, he can have nothing to wish for."

"Lord warrant us, there is a notable sweet saying now!" exclaimed Aunt Breedbate, her harsh features subdued as nearly into an expression of cheerfulness as was possible. "I would the worthy man were here, to hear your honor's estimation of him."

"Tell me where he is, I prythee, for I must needs have speech with him," said the knight.

"Jndith!" cried Aune to her younger daughter, who stood at her side, striving in vain to court the notice of either of the gallants, "show those noble gentlemen to the orchard, where your father is."

But Judith seemed not inclined to do anything of the sort. Indeed, fancying herself to have been neglected, she immediately determined not to stir a step. She was again requested by her mother, but seemed as though she heard it not, for she kept making folds in her dress, as though that should be her only employment.

"Nay, an it be your good pleasure, dame," said Sir George, observing the child's reluctance, "let our guide be our sweet acquaintance here."

"An it please you, noble sir," murnured Susanna, who had recovered somewhat of her confidence, and was desirous her sister should be noticed, "my sister Judith will willingly fulfil your honorable wishes."—She had, however, scarce uttered the words, when the spoiled child no less rudely than briefly, put a negative on her assertion. Susanna then, to take off all attention from such uncivilness, at once led the way out of the house, and, opening the wicket of the orchard, pointed to a figure seated reading

beneath a tree at some distance, and with a humble yet graceful courtesy, returned to put her bread into the oven.

The two gallants proceeded quickly towards the tree, and there assuredly was Master Shakspeare, and there also at his feet was Talbot, each apparently, in the other's society, forgetful of the great loss they had sustained. Both rose at the appearance of strangers, with a manner as though, in their secret hearts, they took their coming as an unseasonable interruption to their meditations, the poor hound retiring backward a little as though he was in no mood for any familiarities: a touching contrast to the cheerful maimer with which he was ever wont to welcome any of his master's friends.

"Sir George Carew!" exclaimed Master Shakspear, his pallid features brightening under the influence of the most cheerful of smiles, as he seized the hound that was stretched out for him, and shook it very heartily.

"And your fast friend, be assured, Will," said Sir George, with a famous sincerity; "and here is cousin Clopton, who is going with me to court, and, if it please her majesty, he shall smell powder anon—that is, if he hath stomach for fighting, and liketh his kinsman for his commander."

"I am assured Master Clopton will do credit to his ancestors," observed Master Shakspeare, courteously; "and, with so notable an example before him for all the qualities of good soldiership, as he hath in Sir George Carew, his career in arms must needs be a glorious one."

"That is kindly said, Will," replied the knight, "and kindly meant, I will wager my life for it, else it would not have been spoken by so generous a spirit as Will Shakspeare. But cousin Clopton must to the wars, and endeavor with his sword to gain what divers of his family have lost. Here hath 'the New Place' been sold that hath belonged to them since old Sir Hugh built it in the reign of Henry the Seventh, all for the lack of a little pestilent coin. There is strange news at court, Will," added Sir George, taking Master Shakspeare by the arm, and walking with him apart. "My Lord Southampton—"

"What of him?" eagerly cried the other.

"He hath been so rash as to wed Mistress Varnon, despite her Highness's commands to the contrary."

"Well?" said Master Shakspeare, impatiently.

"And the Queen in great wrath hath lodged them both in the Tower. I fear me

neither will escape easily, for it is said she is more furious against them than was she with Raleigh for a like offence. I grieve for the sweet lady he hath chosen, and I grieve for him also, for in truth I liked him well."

"He had a heart, Sir George, as noble as his name!" cried his companion with a deep earnestness.

"Ay, that he had, I am assured. And he was a true friend to you, Will, for I have oft heard him speak of you, as though no other man was so well esteemed of him."

"He had a most princely disposition, and ever acted towards me no less worthily than he spoke," said his friend.

"Well! I wish him well out of his present lodging!"

"Amen, Sir George, with all my heart!"

"There is the most singular business connected with this marriage that ever was heard of," added the knight, in a livelier tone. "It is said my lord could not have succeeded in his measures, had he not got important assistance from a certain master of music, who—mark the exquisite policy of it, Will—got admittance to the house of the lady's kinswoman—as ancient a piece of goods as ever was met with; and, what think you? by this hand, he brought my lord with him, and by means of some disguise passed him off as his boy; and, to keep the old gentlewoman's attention from the lovers, did pursue a suit of his own to her with such vehemeney, that speedily she had neither eyes, heart, nor tongue, for any but the master of music. She hath made such bitter complaints to the Queen of the jest that hath been played her, that her Highness became in a towering passion, and issued orders for his instant apprehension—vowing he should smart for it; but the wonder of it is, search hath been made throughout the kingdom with a most minute description of this Master Dulcimer's person, manners, and dress, and there hath been no such a musician seen or heard of."

Master Shakspeare had a great to do to maintain the unconcern and gravity of his aspect, during this speech. At last he mastered his inclination for mirth, and quietly inquired if those who had been in search of the master of music had found trace of him.

"None, and the mystery is such, it hath been shrewdly hinted, my lord hath had recourse to the powers of darkness, and the ancient damsel is now frightening herself out of her seven senses with the horrible apprehension she hath been enamored of the devil."

At this Master Shakspeare could contain himself no longer, but he burst out into as hearty a laugh as ever was heard, in the which Sir George Carew joined in as perfect an abandonment, and they too continued for some time longer making light of Aunt Deborah's passion. Nevertheless, one was more concerned than he appeared, for the news of Lord Southampton's imprisonment in the Tower, with the exquisite sweet creature he had married, was exceeding ill news to him, and he scarce heard of it, ere he fell to considering the best means for securing his liberation.

The penalties he had already drawn upon himself in seeking to secure his friend's happiness, he thought not of for a moment. He remembered only the prodigal kindness with which that friend had regarded him, when such behavior was of the highest consequence to the advancement of his fortunes, and that the generous spirit to whom he was so indebted was chafing within the miserable compass of four stone walls.

All this time Master Clopton was striving earnestly to be on good acquaintance with Talbot, but for a long space his commendations and pattings were little heeded. Indeed, as though the poor beast wanted no such company, he more than once removed himself from the young Squire's neighborhood; but the latter would by no means be so easily kept at a distance, for he liked the noble appearance of the dog. Talbot had too good a heart to resist long any seeming kindness where he suspected no ill, and at last the "Ho Talbot!" "Brave Talbot!" was listened to with the wave of the tail which denoteth satisfaction in such animals, and a little while after he allowed himself to be handled with more familiarity than he would previously have suffered. In the end, the two seemed to have come to a tolerable understanding.

After Sir George Carew had—for he would take no denial—made Master Shakspeare promise to join a few friends on a certain day, who were coming to eat venison with him at Clopton Hall, ere he returned to the wars, they walked leisurely to the house, young Clopton and Talbot following at a little distance. They were in the garden, when they were suddenly stopped by hearing through an open casement close to which they had approached, a musically sweet voice carolling the following ditty.

THE BEGUILING OF THE BIRD.

"What ho, silly wanton! why wouldst thou away,
With thy feathers so glossy and fine ?

Here are cates of the best, come and taste them
I pray,
Come enjoy this brave feast whilst 'tis thine." So spoke a bold fowler—(in sooth a fair speech)
His nets the while spreading with care;
But the bird 'mongst the branches kept out of
his reach,
And would not be caught in the snare.

"Ah me, what a carol!" he cunningly said,
As her throat gave its tones sweet and clear.
"Oh, I would, matchless singer, thou wert not
afraid,
Half thy skill now escapeth mine ear."
Well pleased with his praises, now closer she
drew,
Her song in his hearing to get;
As he flattered, still nearer and nearer she flew,
And, lo ! was enclosed in the net!"

Sir George peeped through the easement. There was no one in the chamber but Susanna. She was left alone as usual, whilst her aunts and her mother and sister were gone a-pleasuring and there was she solacing herself at her spinning-wheel with a spirit as blithe as her voice was melodious.

CHAPTER X.

Eche is not letted that nowe is made a lorde,
Nor eche a clerke that hath a benefice:
They are not all lawyers that plees do recorde,
All that are promoted are not fully wise,
On suche chaunce now fortune throws her
dice.

BARKLAY'S SHIP OF FOOLS.

Oh ! sister An, what dremes
Be these that me torment ! Thus afraide,
What new come gest unto our realme ys come !

SURREY'S VIRGIL.

"LAUNCELOT!" bawled a sharp voice, in as loud a pitch as ever angry woman used. No reply followed. "Launce, I say ! thou lazy varlet," continued she, lowering of her key not a jot. "Here it be five o'clock, and thou abed. An thou art not a stirring in a presently, I'll cudgel thee within an iuch of thy life!"

"Coming, mistress!" replied a boy, raising himself on his elbow from a heap of rushes and shavings in the corner of an upper chamber in the roof of the house, lighted only by a small window. The coarse coverlet that fell from his shoulders disclosed to view the same fat, foolish visage, that was made known to the reader in the opening chapter of this volume, as belonging to a boy known throughout Stratford as Rag-

ged Launce. His mouth now was extending itself in a yawn which threatened to make the little nose above it—the point whereof, by nature, had a singular inclination upwards—dissolve into the chubby red cheeks, that with no particular show of cleanliness pressed against it on either side. An arm, wrapped in a shirt sleeve, no less soiled than ragged, was about the same time drawn out, and the hand commenced scratching, with a lazy motion, a head, evidently unused to other comb or brush than the owner had store of at his fingers' ends.

There was scarce light sufficient to distinguish the candle-end stuck in a bottle that was upon an old box, the ballads against the wall, or the rude drawings, with a bit of charcoal, that covered every side of the room, whereof the principal seemed to be that of a woman in divers ridiculous attitudes, and undesirable situations. Nevertheless, besides these, a few articles of wearing-apparel lay in disorder upon the floor, with a goodly commodity of nut-shells, apple-cores, cherry-stones, small bones, bits of crust, cheese-parings, and the like, doubtless the remnants of sundry feasts gone by, which the sole inhabitant of the chamber had enjoyed in solitary contentation.

Launce still reclined on his elbow, in a state half asleep and half awake. Yawn followed yawn with little intermission; and the scratching of the head was only occasionally varied by a slight rubbing of the knuckles against the eyes, or a stretching out of the arm to its full extent. In short, he went through all the manœuvres of one who hath been disturbed in his slumber ere he hath had enough of it, and is marvelously inclined to obtain the deficiency. In the last yawn, his elbow slipped from under him, and his head quietly dropped upon it; the outstretched arm sunk at his side, and in a moment he was in as deep a sleep as tired apprentice ever had.

Mayhap he was dreaming of some good sport with his fellows, in a holiday stroll to Pimlico Path, or a famous pennyworth for his own particular delectation all among the pleasant fields of Islington. Yet it mattered not of what his dream might be, for he was scarce well into it when he was disturbed with so main a cry that he jumped clean out of the coverlet, to the manifest disclosure of certain lower garments of coarse texture, much the worse for wear, of the which he had not taken the trouble to divest himself when seeking of his proper rest the previous night.

"Launce! Launce! thou lazy catif!"

I'll rouse thee, I warrant me, ere thou art a minute older."

"I be tiring myself, mistress, and shall be down straight, and it please you," replied the boy, in a mild, deprecating kind of voice, as he left off awhile scratching, and rubbing, and stretching of himself—ever and anon giving a slight shiver, as though he were none of the hottest, to twitch up his darned hose and patched breeches, bearing witness of many a soil and much hard service.

"I'll tire thee, by the rood!" exclaimed the same female who had spoken before. "Did I not tell thee over-night to be up betimes, because of my desiring to go with my worthy neighbors to see the Queen's Highness enter the city returning from a progress, and, as I'm an honest wooman, this is the fifth time thou hast played me the sluggard's trick since my first calling. But an I be tricked any more in this sort, I'll give my head to play at bowls with."

"Nay, o' my life, mistress, I be putting on my jerkin!" cried the apprentice, with a very monstrous earnestness, as he caught up that part of his apparel from the floor, and proceeded to put his arms through the sleeves with something more of wakefulness than he had shown heretofore. Whilst so employed, he seemed to listen attentively. Apparently all was quiet in the lower chamber, for he slackened considerably in his hurry of apparelling himself, and the earnestness of his features gave place to a roguish impudence and boyish cunning.

"The old hawk sticks to her perch!" muttered he, with a grin of exquisite self-congratulation. "Rateth as she may, she liketh no more leaving her roost thus early, of a pestilent raw morning, than do I."

Saying this, he sauntered leisurely towards the small window that looked out into the street, which he opened carefully; then, suddenly spying of a boy, who looked to be about his own age, on the opposite side, leaning on his arms on the window-sill, over-against him, watching a couple of cats on a neighboring roof, he snatched up one of the sundry rotten apples that lay together on the box, and flung it with all his force at the boy's head; doubtless the aim was a true one, for the varlet, with a half-audible chuckle, hastily crouched down, so as to be out of sight of him he had thrown at, and there for a second or two remained, striving hard to repress a violent burst of mischievous laughter.

Presently he raised himself slowly, as if with a view of reconnoitering the position of the assailed party; but, to all appearance,

the latter was familiar with his mode of warfare, and was right willing to return the attack, for Launce had scarce got his shaggy pole over the base of the open casement, when an old cabbage-stump came whizzing over it, with a force which, had it been less hastily discharged, might, thick as it was, have done it no slight damage.

"O' my life, well thrown, Martin!" cried Launce, with a taunting sort of laugh, the which the other could hear well enough. "Wounds! an I were a Shrovetide cock, I would pray right heartily for such thorough aimstrights."

"I would thou wert!" replied the opposite boy. "But coek, or no cock, here's at thy cocks-comb!" and, ere Launce was well aware, a missile of the like sort as was thrown at him awhile since came against his luckless pole with such force, that he was fain to cry out from the smart. A loud clear laugh, across the street, was all he got for his hurt in the way of sympathy.

"Cock-a-doodle-do!" screamed the merry knave, like a very chanticleer, exulting at the manner he had answered the other's sarcasm. "Body o' me, but thou makest a brave cock, Launce. Prythee wait till I can get me another stump, and I will knock thee off thy legs so prettily thou shalt fancy nought ever after but turning of such delicate summersets."

"Slife, and I do not pay thee for that, call me a pickled hedgehog!" replied Launce in some rage, putting his hand tenderly to the bruised part:—"here be a lump coming, of I know not what size; but let me catch thee; I'll warrant thou shalt have as famous a drubbing——"

"Dost talk of drubbing, thou worthless varlet?" exclaimed a voice close to him, that make him quake from head to foot. A woman, apparently of a goodly size, but so wrapped in a huge cloak thrown over her petticoat, her figure could not fairly be told, and wearing so vinegar an aspect withal, it might have done monstrous good service in the way of pickling, was at his elbow.

"Dost talk of drubbing?" she continued; "I'll drub thee, i' faith!" and thereupon began raining down upon Launce's devoted head, with all the vigor of her brawny arm, such abundant store of blows, as might have sufficed a flagellating friar for a whole year. He roared most lustily; no town-bull could have done so more to the life; but the offended Tabitha heeded his cries and supplications no more than a cat heeds the squeaking of a mouse she is about to make her repast of.

"Have I not been bawling myself hoarse

for thee these two hours!" said she to him in a manner that could not be gainsayed. "Did I not tell thee over-night to be sure to be stirring betimes, for that I was bent on going to witness the goodly pageants that are to be seen to-day in honor of our admirable sweet queen?—and, instead of getting the shop swept and dusted, and the house opened, and the fire lit in the kitchen, and all things made ready for what company may come, thou art at thy old tricks, and be hanged to thee! Get thee to thy work on the instant! Well deservest thou the name thou art known by. Thou art Lazy Launce, with a vengeance. But I'll have no idle 'prentices. An I catch thee at these pranks again, it shall go worse with thee, I'll warrant. Troop, sirrah, whilst thou hast a whole skin, for my fingers do itch to be at thee."

Launce had vainly essayed, with a marvellous prodigality of writhings and twistings, to get free of his mistress's powerful grasp, whilst she was displaying so much at his expense her eloquence and vigor; and, so soon as he found her hold relax, he bounded out of her reach, and fled down the narrow stairs with the speed of a liberated rat. But he had not got so easily quit of her as he imagined. Ere he had reached the kitchen, which was a long irregular chamber, at the back of the house, and served for the general eating-room, he heard her voice bawling to him to return. This he did with some misgiving, and an infinite lack of speed, for there was that in its tones which seemed to bode him no good.

"Prythee how come these figures here?" asked she, with a look that appeared to the unhappy Launce to threaten killing by inches. His mistress pointed to a ridiculous effigy of herself carried pick-a-back on a personage, who, by his horns and tail, was evidently intended to represent the arch enemy of mankind; whilst another demon of the like sort was preparing to thrust a pitchfork into her flesh, in the part of it that looked to offer the firniest hold. A little further on was the same female figure hanging on a gallows, whilst a whole circle of devils were portrayed fantastically dancing just beneath her. Above was written, in large uneven letters of the strangest shape eye ever met with:—

"With thy dog's nose and pig's eyes,
The devil hath got a notable prize;
Thou'rt a jade that's ever a bawling and bang-ing.
And I warrant thou'l be none the worse for a
good hanging."

In another place, a monstrous cat was

drawn, seemingly at death's door, and underneath these lines were writ:—

“ The shabby,
Scabby.
Flabby-dabby,
old
TABBY ;”

the last word in larger characters than the others, and doubtless meant to be the familiar abbreviation of the good Tabitha's name.

“ How came these villainous figures here ? ” repeated she, in a louder key, to her trembling apprentice.

“ Nay, o' my life, mistress, I know not ! ” replied Launce, looking the very picture of virtuous astonishment and indignation.

“ Thou abominable young villain, thou ! ” exclaimed the enraged woman, grasping with one hand the long hair of her apprentice, whilst in the other she held a stick she had snatched from a corner, the which she lost no time in putting across his shoulders with a right good will in every stroke. Her tongue, too, was excellently well exercised the whilst.

“ Dost thou dare write such horrid libels of me, thy too indulgent mistress ! Have I a dog's nose, catiff ? answer me that. Have I pig's eyes, thou perjured reprobate ! Wouldst thou have me hanged, forsooth ! I'll shabby thee ! I'll scabby thee ! I'll flabby-dabby thee with a vengeance ! An I leave an inch of thy pestilent skin innocent of the cudgel, I'll give thee leave to carry on thy scurvy jests till doomsday ! ”

As every sentence here put down was ended with a blow, the only answer Mistress Tabitha got of her questions came to her in the pitifullest cries engedged apprentice ever attempted, and doubtless she might have continued her punishment and her speech for some time longer, had not he, taking advantage of her letting go his hair to obtain a hold on the collar of his jerkin, rushed from her, yelling most piteously, at a pace that left no chance of her coming up to him again very readily.

Leaving this good dame to digest as well as she might the affront she had received from Launce's revenge of her former savageness to him, we shall follow him to the kitchen, where, smarting from the fury of her discipline, he was diligently essaying to strike a light, but, in consequence of his tears, whereof there was a plentiful supply, falling into the tinder, he knocked his knuckles with small profit.

In this strait, cursing heartily all termagant mistresses, and sparks that went

out as soon as they showed themselves, he drew his sleeve across his eyes, took a candle in his hand, and, opening a door right against him, proceeded into a narrow yard, having a paling on each side so much broke as to admit easily of his passing over it. This he did ; and, entering at a wicket belonging to the next house, he found himself among some half-dozen slovenly men and boys, sitting cross-legged on a huge table, where many lights were a burning, stitching away upon divers garments before them with a most commendable speed.

Scarce had he shown himself, ere Lanne was hailed by all present as a familiar and perchance a welcome acquaintance ; none failing to attempt a merry jest at his expense. Launce lit his candle, as though he was so crest-fallen of his late beating he had not a word to throw away on a dog, nay not even on a tailor ; but, as he was on the eve of departing, he slowly pushed the hot iron, with which one had that moment been flattening the seams of a doublet, against the bare toe peeping out of the ragged hose of him who seemed to possess a greater commodity of jokes than the others ; and, as he—screaming with the greatness of the pain—started back with a force which laid his neighbor on his back, and put all his fellows into a sudden terror, the boy, with a loud laugh, whisked out of the chamber, jumped over the paling, and was soon engaged upon his duties in the kitchen, as light of heart, from the remembrance of the trick he had played Toby Snipkin, as if he knew not what a beating meant.

It should here be made known to the courteous reader, that Mistress Tabitha Thatchpole carried on the art of a capper, in a goodly tenement situated in Golden Lane, Barbican ; the which excellent calling her father, honest Barnabas Thatchpole, had pursued in good repute till his death, leaving it, and all the profits therunto appertaining, to his beloved daughter and sole heiress, the estimable Mistress Tabitha Thatchpole aforesaid. How it came to pass, that, with so tempting an addition as this trade in caps, to a visage and person by no means of the ordinary sort—the former having a striking resemblance to that of a sand-boy's horse, and the latter being built much after the fashion of a coal-barge—the name of Tabitha Thatchpole should have clung to her even after her lease of it had been protracted beyond half a century, remaineth the most incomprehensible of mysteries. Certain is it, she had strove all that a poor woman could to alter this undesirabile state of things. She first sought the

young, who would have none of her; then aspired to the middle-aged, who gave her as little comfort; and now very mightily affected the old, with a desperateness, the exceeding desperate nature of the case seemed to give her excellent warrant for.

She was a great furtherer of all manner of merry meetings, both at her own house and those of her neighbors, in which her ostensible object was to bring young people together, in whose happiness she professed a marvellous interest. When she had succeeded in getting her female friends conveniently disposed of, she would, with an animableness to which no pen can do justice, sit herself by the side of any respectable grey-beard widower or bachelor—it mattered not which, so easily pleased was she—who happened to be amongst the company, and dilate on mutual affection and the union of appropriate ages, in a strain that ought to have subdued the most callous and indifferent old heart that ever throbbed under a comfortable jerkin.

Launce had been sent from Stratford, by Tommy Hart, to his kinswoman, Tabitha Thatchpole, of London, at her earnest solicitation to have some such a boy as he was to assist her in her business. To prevent his quitting her, as some had done with exceeding brief warning, she lost no time in having him bound apprentice; and here, in Golden Lane, Barbican, was Launce fixed, under the tender mercies of the fair Tabitha, ostensibly to learn the art and mystery of a capper, but, in fact, to do all things, from the top of the house to the bottom, and get nought for his pains but blows and abuse.

Had it not been for the fellowship of a few merry knaves in the neighborhood, about his own age, with whom he was as often at loggerheads as in sworn brotherhood, it is hugely to be doubted if his indentures would have held him in Golden Lane for a day.

It must now be supposed that he made an ample fire in the kitchen—a chamber, floored with red brick, which formed, save on grand occasions, the usual sitting-room—and in this duty he had so long lingered that Mistress Tabitha carne nigh upon catching him lying his length on one of the settles that stood on each side of the ample chimney corner, forgetful of all else but the comfortableness of his situation. The hearing of her foot on the stair, however, roused him as effectually as might a cannon fired close to his ear; and, in the twinkling of an eye, he was as busy as a bee sweeping out the front chamber.

Here she presently entered, scolding and cuffing him for not finding things there exactly to her mind. This was out of its place, that was carelessly put by, and the other ought to have gone to a customer; then, some fine cap or another had been injured by his utter carelessness; and she had lost the sale of others by his placing them, to keep them free of moth and dust, where they were never to be got at.

"Launce!" cried she, sharply, having completed her arrangements in the kitchen.

"Anon, mistress," replied the boy.

"What said that worthy Master Docter Posset to my message of last night?"

"An it please you, mistress, he said nought."

"How so, fellow?"

"For this most especial reason:—he was attending a candlemaker's wife in Bread Street, and could have no note of your message, mistress." A sharp box on the ear followed this speech.

"Wilt never have done with thy fool's answers, thou miserable dolt, thou! But thou had speech of his admirable daughter, Mistress Millicent?"

"An it please you, mistress, I had," replied Launce, rubbing his ear with some vigor. "That is to say, when it pleased her to have done a swounding, for when I got me into Master Doctor's chamber, there I found Mistress Millicent on the ground, supported by a strange young fellow, looking as solemn as the queen of Sheba, done in worsted, that is up stairs in the blue chamber."

"Master John Hall, perchance. But were they alone?"

"No, mistress. There was the physician's man there, too."

"Physician's man, fellow!" exclaimed Tabitha, aiming another blow at him, which he avoided by ducking his head; an accomplishment in which practice had made him so proficient, he rarely failed of escaping the intended blow. "Physician's man! Canst not say Master Leonard?" Then, in a lower tone, continued, "Doubtless, he was greatly concerned at the sad plight of one to whom he hath been so long betrothed. Was no other present?"

"Yes, mistress, there was the stufid aligator hanging from the top of the chamber, and the kitten, with five legs, that was in a bottle on a shelf."

"Out, fool!" cried his mistress, aiming her customary salute with no more profit than before. "Thou art the most incorrigible ass ever honest woman was troubled with. But what followed?"

"Followed, mistress?" repeated Launce, scratching his head in some perplexity. "O' my life, I saw no following of any one for they all stood where they were."

"Knavy, dolt, idiot!" exclaimed Mistress Tabitha, her remarkable yellow complexion getting suddenly enpurpled with rage, as she sought to inflict a proper chastisement on her apprentice. "What said they to you? Tell me on the instant, or I will beat thee to a shaving."

"An it please you, mistress, they said but little, till Mistress Millicent recovered herself from her swound, when they questioned me as to my errand to the doctor; the which having told, Mistress Millicent presently spoke in a monstrous small voice, and said Master Doctor should come without fail, and there should be in his company herself and a young acquaintance, whom methinks she called Mildred, with Master John Hall and Master Leonard Supple."

"Good; and you went to Martin Poins, the spurrier?"

"I did, an it please you, mistress; and he said he would come the instant after morning prayers."

"Ah, good, excellent man! A most admirable, worthy christian. And what said Simon Peltrey, the leather-seller?"

"In troth, mistress," replied the boy, despite of the fear in which he stood before his mistress, a smile of roguish meaning breaking over his grimy cheeks, "he was in no case for the saying of any great matter, seeing that I found him at the Peacock, so overcome with the drinking of new ale, that he was as blind as a bat, as deaf as a beetle, and as mute as an owl; and when I roused him to hear of your message, he replied, unconnected, and confusedly, in praise of sobriety, adding, the fiddlers must needs pray for your death right heartily, for they would then be like to get such exquisite tough catgut as they had never seen all their lives before."

"A merry knave, i' faith!" exclaimed the rather antiquated dansel, who could find toleration for the faults of every man who afforded her the slightest prospect of a husband. "He must needs have his jest. And how sped you with Roger Chinks, the lantern-maker?"

"An it please you, mistress, with no great profit. Chinks was hard at work among his men, and received your message as though it were a huge affront. He might or he might not come. He cared not. An it suited him, he would; and the like."

"As honest a heart as ever broke bread!"

cried Mistress Tabitha. "And what said Master Galliard?"

"The old Frenchman fellow, an it please you?"

"The French gentleman, sirrah," replied the other, sharply.

"Nay, o' my life, mistress, I took him to be a right Tom o' Bedlam, for I found him playing of all sorts of antics in Bessy Marshmallow, the simple woman's upper chamber. He was twisting, and turning, and curveting, and capering, worse than an unbroke colt; and his toe kept pointing to all quarters of the wind, for all the world like the great vane on the top of our church."

"But what said he to my message?"

"A long speech, and a flowery, but in such outlandish phrases, I had to cudgel my brains pretty soundly ere I could get so much as a glimpse at the sense of it. He laid his hand on the breast of his doublet, and made a leg to me as though I was the Emperor of the Indies. This I let pass, but he presently fell to calling you mad-dam, which I taking to be some reflection on you it did not become me to be a listening to, up and told him I'd punch his head if he called my mistress any such names, for she wasn't a bit of a 'mad-dam,' not she, and he was a scurvy rogue, and lied in his pestilent throat. On this, the villain had the horrible impudency to say something about a pardonnez moi, the which was, I doubt not, a more gross offence than t'other, so I would no longer stand to be so put upon, and straightway gave him so sore a clout on the chaps it sent him spinning to the other side of the chamber; whereupon he ent with his toasting-iron, and would have skewered me against the wall, like a pickled herring left to dry, had I not shown him a fair pair of heels, ere he had got it fairly out of its scabbard."

In making this relation, Launce had some hopes of being rewarded for the great zeal he had shewn in his mistress's defence. What then must have been his astonishment when of a sudden a shower of blows came on his defenceless head, which all his skill in taking care of put at nought—she the whilst rating him for his rudeness and bearishness in such terms of vehemence as went night to take her breath away!

The hapless apprentice vanished from her presence as quickly as he might, vowing from his heart the pestilent Frenchman might call the old Tabby whatsoever disreputable name he chose, without his ever attempting to wag a finger in her defence.

He returned to the front chamber, where

he occupied himself very busily in putting his mistress's wares in the most tempting array. It bad a broad casement, looking into the street, made up of small diamond panes, through which the passenger, if he chose to peer with any great degree of curiosity, might note a vast display of caps and hats of all fashions, from the statute cap of the humble artisan, to the goodly cothbank beaver of the gay gallant. On shelves, on one side, were placed rows of boxes, and upright against the wainscoting, was fixed a long mirror, in a carved frame, on which Mistress Tabitha set great store. A large table, having a motley assortment of hats, caps, feathers, brushes, irons, and blocks, and two stools, that seemed to have seen good service, constituted the remainder of the furniture—save only Launce, without whom Tabitha Thatchpole might have kept the place empty.

He was not, however, as usual, allowed to be long doing of any thing without his mistress coming and rating him for not doing it to her liking. Nought satisfied her of his performance, essayed he ever so. Nevertheless, in the midst of her culling and rating, she on a sudden changed the crabbed expression of her countenance for one of the absolutest sweetness. At that moment there entered a tall, thin, figure, hat in hand, which was pressed against his breast with a marvellous energy, as he bowed himself almost to the ground. His face looked to be mightily given to wrinkles, but two restless, sharp eyes gave it a youthfulness, the greyness of his beard and hair, both of which were somewhat of the longest, belied; his suit had once been fine, but it was now threadbare and faded, yet there was not a soil in it from top to toe; the ruff looked fresh from the starcher's, and the shoe-roses were without a crumple, though they had graced the feet of the wearer any time these ten years. The stranger was Monsieur Galliard, of whom mention has just been made.

Mistress Tabitha tripped up to him with the most amiable manner ever seen; whereupon Monsieur Galliard seized one of her enormous hands, and pressed it betwixt both his, and bowed upon it, and shrugged his shoulders with an appearance of profound devotion.

In sober truth, they were most like unto a pair of Barbary apes chattering and grimacing, than two human beings. Whilst, however, they were completely taken up with passing mutual civilities, they were suddenly disturbed by a loud, joyous laugh behind them, and, turning round, discovered

a fellow somewhat coarsely apparell'd, standing at the door with his hands on his hips, and a jolly face well covered with fiery carbuncles, expanding under the influence of a hearty laugh.

"Heart o' me!" cried he, merrily, "I would rather have lost my best stroke at bowls, than so exquisite moving a scene. Here's choice fooling—brave fooling—delicate fooling as ever was witnessed! If Will Somers had been alive, he could never have compassed it."

"Ah, Simon Peltrey, Simon Peltrey!" exclaimed Mistress Tabitha, "ever at thy merry conceits! Why, what a man thou art!"

"Man, quotha!" answered the leather-seller, giving the grinning Frenchman, as he offered his salutations, a slap on the back that appeared, for the moment, to have taken his breath away. "In troth, I look upon myself to be as good a man as any that never was a better. What sayest, good Mounseer Spindleshanks?"

"But talking is dry work, dame," added he. "Hast ever a draught o' small ale? for I supped last night of pickled herrings, and, if I hid a drop of honest liquor to cleanse my throat of the salt, I am a Dutchman." This assertion what Launce had stated of him completely disproved; therefore, it can be in no way strange that, on hearing it, the apprentice, who was close at hand, opened his eyes with very absolute amazement. Nevertheless, Mistress Tabitha very courteously bade him follow her, to partake of such poor cheer as the house afforded, the which welcome bidding the thirsty leatherseller gladly accepted, and without more words, the three proceeded in that direction.

They had scarce arrived in the inner chamber, and were intent on seating themselves comfortably in the chimney-corner, when voices were heard approaching, which immediately sent away Mistress Tabitha to welcome the new comer. One of these proved to be a truly broad-shouldered man, with an exceeding dark complexion and severe expression of countenance, and apparently of a middle age, who was presently hailed by the parties already arrived as Roger Chinks, the lantern-maker. The other wore a more pleasing look, and was attired in less coarse apparelling; and he, when receiving the attentions of the now superlatively amiable Tabitha Thatchpole, appeared to own the name of Martin Poins, the spurrier.

The former spoke but few words, and they of the gruffest, to his hostess's oft-

repeated assurance of her gladness at the sight of him ; and the replies of the latter consisted, for the most part, of allusions to the goodness of Providence in allowing him the gratification of visiting so excellently disposed an acquaintance as neighbor Thatchpole.

With him came a boy, out of all doubt his son, of about the tallness of Launce, though of far greater slimness, and of more intelligent features ; and, whilst the rest of company were completely engaged with their gossip, he had got a spur in his hand, which he held nigh to the cheek of Launce, who, unaware or his close neighborhood, was intent upon trimming of a hat for a customer, and, upon hearing of his name whispered in his ear, turned suddenly round, and received the prickles of the spur in his cheek. Smarting with the pain, he gave the young rogue who inflicted it, and with a laugh was endeavoring at his best speed to get out of his reach, a sharp kick on the shins, the which made him cry out, and commence rubbing his hurt leg with a most doleful visage.

Upon Mistress Tabitha inquiring what ailed him, he very readily stated that he had hit his leg against the table ; the which was instantly believed to be the truth, for no one could have fancied from Launce's unconcerned visage, that he had aught to do with the matter. But they were both very dogs at such tricks. Martin Poins was he who had flung at Launce with so true an aim across the way when the latter was jibing him for being wide of the mark ; and indeed, morning, noon, and night, were they slyly engaged in such warfare—for all which two such fast friends never existed. They not only never complained when one suffered of the other, contenting themselves with retaliating at the first opportunity, but each would fight for the other at a pinch as long as he could stand.

Martin, having been left behind when Tabitha and her two guests proceeded to join the others in the kitchen, commenced a race round the table after Launce, which had not lasted long before one knocked down a goodly heap of boxes, which stood convenient in a corner. Tabitha Thatchpole and her company rushed into the front chamber to see what was the matter ; when Launce, with as absolute a solemnness as any judge could have assumed, stated that the mischief had been done by a strange dog, whom Martin and he strove earnestly to send a packing, and, as Martin, with quite as great a seriousness asserted to the same thing, with sundry additions, in

which he described the monstrous ugly pestilential beast they had such difficulty in getting rid of, they all returned to the chimney-corner ; Mistress Tabitha bidding her apprentice replace the fallen boxes, and, taking in her hand the spurrier's son, whom she seemed intent upon making much of, perchance with a view of creating in the mind of the portly widower, his father, an idea that she would make the very properst sort of mother for him.

Scarce, however, had she got him into the kitchen, when she again hurried back with the same pleased alacrity, for there a group waited, whose voices she had heard, to whom she seemed bound by no ordinary tie. First she rushed eagerly towards a young female of rather a commanding figure, tall, and somewhat stout of shape, with a face, though it could not be ranked of the handsomest, possessed of a pleasing expression, which peculiar set off as it was with all possible art, as was her person, gave to her an exceeding agreeable appearance. In this tempting guise it was rather difficult at first to recognize the damsels that was in so pitiable a state on Master Doctor Posset's stairs at the entrance into his house of the new scholar.

Millicent had on one side of her a youth of exceeding good carriage and appearance, having a round good-natured sort of face, and a head remarkable for a profusion of very light air. He was soon hailed by his smiling hostess as the Master Leonard to whom it has been stated Millicent was betrothed. On the other side was an acquaintance of the courteous reader's of older standing—no other than our reserved student of medicine, John Hall. He looked somewhat less grave of aspect than had been his wont when in company with his marvellous careful guide, Simon Stockfish—long since with those estimable specimens of horseflesh, Dapple and Jack, in ease and security in his native hamlet. Both these youths were welcomed with similar demonstrations of their infinite contentation at their coming.

From them she hurried to a little damsels, who hung on the arm of the physician—the same who was in attendance with Mistress Tabitha on the fair Millicent when we first had acquaintance with her. Her features were fair and regular, and might be thought comely, but a constant humor she had of laughing in a child-like manner, though she was within a year as old as her friend the physician's daughter, gave her aspect an air of silliness. Mildred was caressed as eagerly as had been Millicent. There remained

now only Master Doctor Posset himself, for her who was so intent on playing the amiable hostess to welcome, and right welcome was he made. Indeed, the sober-clad, active little man, with his saturnine complexion, and beard of formal cut, was as dear to Mistress Tabitha as the apple of her eye; and all the attentions she lavished on his daughter, and the attachment she professed for every one and everything belonging to the physician, were for him, and for him only. Even the courteous master of dancing fell far short of the esteem with which she regarded the doctor of physic, and all other men whatsoever were as nothing in her eyes compared to him.

All apparently in the choicest spirits, the little Mildred, heard above the rest, giggling at every word, proceeded to the chamber where the others of the party were assembled, and, after mutual salutations had passed, they were placed at their several seats, the doctor having the place of honor; and the cold sirloin and the manchets, the pasty, the turkey poufts, and the other goodly things their hospitable caterer had provided for her guests, were quickly, with the help of a huge flagon of ale, passing from the dishes into the trenchers, and from the trenchers down the throats of the company; Mistress Tabitha pressing all with a most bountiful spirit, but kindly taking care the little doctor should have the tit-bits, and he intent upon making the best use of her welcome attentions; Monsieur Galliard administering to the wants and wishes of every female in the circle with an infinity of sugared compliments and expressive pantomime, the which seemed to afford such absolute diversion to Mildred, her childish mirth was breaking forth at every minute; the jolly leather-seller drinking to all with more freedom than good manners; the pious spurrier moralizing at every mouthful, and the surly lantern-maker saying naught unless spoke to, and then being so short in his speech, few but they who knew his humor would have tolerated such bearishness.

Young Martin Poins, found himself carefully pleased by the side of his hostess, for she was too experienced a campaigner not to have two strings to her bow—indeed, she might have acknowledged to at least half a dozen—where he was plentifully supplied with whatever the table afforded, with a vast show of “sweet-hearts,” “dear little rogues,” and the like. After awhile, Launce joined the group, having washed his face and hands, and put himself into as decent a trim as he could, and sat opposite young Poins, and these two mischievous varlets kept amusing

themselves during their meal, by endeavoring to stamp on each other's toes under the table, looking the whilst as though nothing was so far from their thoughts. It chanced that Launce, intending inflicting on the other a proper punishment for the missile that had given him so sore a blow that morning, stamped with all his force, after, as he thought, he had made sure of his victim.

In an instant the guests were prodigiously alarmed, by seeing Mistress Tabitha jump from the table in the middle of an animated discourse she was holding, and, screaming like twenty wild-cats, commence hopping about the chamber, frantically holding of one foot in her hand. A soft corn of exquisite tenderness she had long endeavored to conceal had received the full force of the heavy foot of her apprentice; but her gestures and grimaces were so singular that even those who were most eager to proffer their assistance could scarce restrain their mirth. Martin Poins endeavored to smother his laughter by hiding his face in his arms, which were crossed before him on the table, ever and anon peeping up at the bewildered Launce, with eyes that glistened again with the intensity of his enjoyment.

The Frenchman looked the most concerned, and was in an instant at her side with the equally attentive Millicent, expressing all manner of consolation and sympathy after his fashion; the little doctor, like most of the others, had more in his countenance of marvel than of pity; Mildred was giggling openly; and Simon Pelry was having a more hearty laugh in the nearly empty flagon he held for disguise before his face.

Tabitha Thatchpole found that she had a difficult part to play. Had she followed her inclinations, her apprentice—for she was but too well satisfied to whom she was indebted for her intolerable suffering—would not have had a whole bone in his body, ere one could count twenty; but, had she exhibited her wrath, her character for sweetness of disposition she had been at such infinite trouble to make her friends properly aware of, might have been in some danger; therefore she thought it most to her interest to put off for the present the display of her rage, and, evidently struggling hard against the agony she endured, she presently limped towards the table, assuring every one it was a sudden pain in her foot, but that it had left her altogether. She glanced but once at Launce, and the hapless apprentice thought he beheld as many cudgels in her eyes as might have sufficed all the apprentices of his acquaintance, in an attack upon the city watch.

Millicent, like the rest, returned to her

place, which was on one side John Hall, Leonard being on the other, and these two seemed rivals in their attentions to the young student. If he had been a brother, he could not have been more kindly cared for. Doubtless this was all in the best spirit of friendship and regard of the youth's amiable disposition; yet, when the full lustrous eyes of the physician's daughter dwelt upon him with the delicious smile which played around her most seductive mouth, it looked as though she invited him to a more tender attachment. However this might be, already John Hall reflected less intently upon the opinions of the learned in his profession, than he had been wont for some years past.

During the greater portion of this time, there had been no lack of discourse amongst the hostess and her guests. There had been a deal of friendly gossip relating to neighbor this, and neighbor t'other; the state of the weather, parish matters—Old Poins being one of the city officers—and, most of all, of the Queen's Highness, of whom many loyal speeches were said—even the bearish Roger Chinks professing a zealous devotion—where she had been during the last progress, the goodly entertainments provided for her, and the excellency of her health and government were canvassed in a spirit that denoted the admiration with which she was regarded by her good and faithful citizens. Something too was said of the day's pageant, but the discussion was brought to a speedy ending by general preparations for departure; Mistress Tabitha, forgetful of her hurt, hurrying them with the fear of losing the sight. Having locked up all the victual, and secured the exclusive attentions of Dr. Posset, she led the way, apparently in the happiest mood possible.

CHAPTER XI.

O happy life, if that their good
The husbandmen but understood!
Who all the day themselves do please,
And younglings with such sports as these;
And, lying down, have nough t' affright
Sweet sleep that makes more short the night.

ROBERT HERRICK.

A NOISE of the roughest, wildest, maddest sort, ever and anon came from one of the humblest tenements in all Stratford. It was borne on the air in gusts, such as made the rafters creak again, when the wintry wind visiteth us in his rudest fashion, but, unlike in this much, it bore little o' the humor of melancholy in its accent. It was a strange medley. In truth it held as little accord-

ance with aught of nature's music, as you may find betwixt the filing of a saw and the strain of a nightingale, and to so extraordinary a degree had it the trick of varying from one character and meaning to another totally opposite, that nothing could exceed the ridiculous effect it had upon such as heard it.

At one time you would have sworn all the cat family in the town of Stratford were pouring forth their amorous declarations; at another it seemed as palpable that a whole pack of curs were snarling and snapping at each other with a most canine ferocity; a moment after, and lo! you heard some lusty-throated cock hurling a shrill defiance to every one of his feathered brethren within a mile of him, which, ere quite ended, would be replied to in as hearty a spirit, by another terribly valiant crower eager to uphold the dignity of his own dunghill; then some contemplative donkey would pour out his honest song in such piercing style you were forced to clap your hands to your ears to shut out the riot. Anon, a peacock would trumpet a most moving flourish; therupon followed, a chorus of ducks, geese, turkeys, pigs and cows, such as ought to have satisfied any one there was a goodly farm close at hand, as well furnished with all manner of live stock as any in Warwickshire; and after such would come a burst of laughter mixed of screams, and the strangest cries ever heard, that sounded as though a score or two of drunken mad fellows were having their diversion, with the devil to pay the piper.

Whence came this strange uproar? what causeth it? what meaneth it? perchance some may ask. Whereof the proper answer can only be got, by leading the questioner by the ears, which, an he will excuse my being so free with him, I will do, unto the very spot where it exists, under which guidance, doubtless, he would marvel hugely at noting what a lack of attentiveness there appeared amongst those he chanced to find nighest to it. Such of the townsfolk as he might meet abroad lingering about the doors of their gossips, or speeding on some urgent errand, seemed to take as little heed of that terrible coil as though it were of no more account than a child's whistle; save when, on a sudden, as it were, it burst out with a greater vehemency of strangeness, the intelligence would stop i' the midst of his news, to join in the laugh those about him raised as they took heed of it, and he on his errand would chuckle to himself as though his brain had just been tickled by the apprehension of some singular good jest.

It was evident, beyond all doubting, that the noise proceeded from a chamber, in a small tenement, at the outskirts of the town ; the wicket whereof—a low door not more than three feet from the ground—though closed, allowed of a free current of air and sound above it. Over the threshold was the rude sign of a pair of shears, which with the diamond-paned easement, a little on one side of it, were half concealed by the tendrils of a thick-spreading creeper, that nearly covered up the whole front of the little dwelling.

Should the curious spectator be induced to peep over the half-door to behold the cause of the racket, which now raged fiercer than ever within, the first thing he would catch a glimpse of would be no other than his odd acquaintance Jonas Tietape, his hose ungartered, his feet unshod, and his slops open at the knees, seated cross-legged on his shop-board without his jerkin, a stitching a kirtle, that seemed much to need his repairing hand, as fiercely as though his life depended on his speedy getting of it done ; all the whilst amusing of himself by making the rude concert already mentioned, the which seemed to afford him the most absolute contentation, for ever and anon he would stop in the midst of it to rid himself of the mirth he could no longer contain.

In the chamber which, in many things, was of a like oddness with its occupant, having an aspect of grotesqueness in all its furniture, a goodly fire was blazing on the hearth, and a rude lamp was burning over his head, both affording him—for it was long after sunset—a sufficiency of light to work by. Perched on a chair, made out of divers rough pieces of such branches as had grown in the most fantastic shapes, was a magpie, evidently keeping a fixed and somewhat suspicious eye on the busy tailor ; and, on the other side of the hearth was seated, on a low bench, a grave and venerable cat, in color much like unto a fox, who also watched him with a marvellous keen look. Besides these, three or four little dogs, of various breeds, were attempting to snatch a brief repose in the neighborhood of the fire.

One of the sources of Jonas' pastime was the annoyace he managed to cause his companions. After a course of odds and ends of ridiculous songs, varied with the mimicry of all manner of animals, his attention would be directed towards the blazing hearth, and they who were enjoying its warmth ; and then he would commence all manner of extravagant grimaces and antics, mingled with the wildest screeching and squealing, till the magpie exhibited its alarm

by flapping its wings, and cawing at him with a very monstrous earnestness. And the cat, no less disturbed, would raise her back, and commence a sort of half-threatening, half-frightened song, in the lowest bass of her compass ; and the little dogs would uncurl themselves and yelp in chorus. This state of things achieved, their delighted owner would fall back in a seeming ecstacy, shouting out his exceeding gratification with a strength of throat, the like of which no man ever heard, and then allow his grave associates a few minutes respite.

Ere he again took to his stitching, he again cleared his throat with an affectation of ceremony most laughable to witness ; taking up an old cittern which was beside him, and gazing at the occupant of the stool, with a passionate tenderness in the first part of each verse the most devoted gallant could not have excelled, he sang the following words, well known by the title of

A RIGHT MOVING DIALOGUE BETWIXT THE
DESPAIRING LOVER AND HIS
JOLLY GOSSIP.

Despairing Lover.

Alack, there is no remedie,

My moving plaint is heard in vain ;

Oh, traitress false, thy treacherie

Doth cleave my very heart in twain !

Jolly Gossip.

Tush, boy, for shame ! the heart that breaks

Can feed no more a thirsty throttle :

Who cares a jot for Fortune's freaks ?—

Come, Drawer, open t'other bottle !

Despairing Lover.

I'm sick of life—I long for death !

Say what ye will, deem as ye list ;

Why should I breathe this worthless breath,

Since I your priceless love have missed ?

Jolly Gossip.

Tush, boy, for shame !—Hold up thine head !

If of thy life she's none so chary,

She'll care still less for thee when dead—

No woman's worth this rare canary.

Despairing Lover.

Ah me, my breast is pierced with woe !

Death's dart doth in my vitals lie :

Thou didst not well to use me so,

Naithless I bless thee as I die.

Jolly Gossip.

Tush, boy, for shame !—What, fall'n indeed,

As ripest acorn in October !

Here, Drawer, help him in his need,

And let him sleep until he's sober !

"By Jeronimo, a good song!" exclaimed a voice, evidently proceeding from one who leaned at his ease, resting of his elbows on the wicket. There could be no more mistaking the merry way of the speaker, than the waggish look that peered over the low door of the woman-tailor's humble tenement. The words had scarce been said when the singer jumped up on the board, whereon he was so nimbly a stitching, with a ridiculous screech, and holding of his right leg, stretched out before him, with his two hands, as though it were an *arquebus*, and he was taking deadly aim at his visitor, uttered a loud sound, threw a summerset, as though from the recoil of the piece, and then made a clear leap out of the open window. No sooner had this been done than he at the wicket leapt lightly over it, sprung on the shop-board, and jumped through the easement after him, which was the commencement of a terrible sharp race betwixt the two; the one screeching and hallooing as though flying for his life, passing over the wicket and through the window like a fox hard pressed, and the other at his heels barking and yelping as though exceeding ravenous to have him for his prey.

The horrible din these two made can scarcely be conceived. Dick, the magpie, flew and hopped about, cawing with a monstrous energy, as though he thought his last hour was come; and Tib, the cat, clambered to a high shelf, where she kept up a constant swearing, spitting, and caterwauling, as the strange chase proceeded, and as each engaged in it passed close by her: the little dogs crowded into one of the corners, barking with all their little might.

Thus these two went on, till on a sudden Jonas, turning quickly round, and making in the opposite direction, they came against each other with so monstrous a shock as to cause both to tumble backwards. For a second or so, they lay silent and motionless, as though dead as any stone. Anon, one raised his head, and peered at his companion, and then again laid himself at his length. The other did the like, with the same affection of gravity; and this they continued to do alternately, Tib and Dick looking on from their resting-places with a singular curiousness, and the little dogs a little less disturbed, but still uttering an occasional bark.

At last they both rose at the same moment, and sat gazing at each other, face to face, with the rueful visages of whipped schoolboys, each putting his finger to his eye, and each commencing first to whimper,

then to sob, and at last to roar as though in the terriblest tribulation.

Suddenly the woman's tailor stopped short in his grief, clapped his hands to his sides, and uttered so piercing a crow, it must needs have been heard by every chanticleer in the parish; whereupon, his companion jumped on his legs, laughing as heartily as ever man did, and flung himself into a chair.

"O' my life, this is exquisite fooling!" exclaimed he. "I would my dame had seen it. Joan's merry heart would have enjoyed it right heartily. In truth, 'twas rare sport. I would rather have lost my best customer than have missed it." The speaker threw himself back in his chair and indulged in a succession of mirthful chuckles. His companion answered not, save by a whoop at his favorites, which made them look intent on a speedy taking of themselves away from their present places of refuge, as he proceeded to do the host's part to his visitor.

The gossips entered upon a jovial carouse, and, as their spirits became refreshed, they grew into a greater content with themselves, and had recourse to their customary tricks, till they kicked up such a racket, the dogs, the cat, and the magpie, were again driven from their ordinary places, on each side the fire, to which they had returned, to find security wherever they could.

It was whilst they were intent upon the performance of some of the maddest of their freaks, that two men, cloaked, and otherwise habited like persons of worship, were proceeding at a slow pace into the town in the direction of the woman-tailor's humble tenement. These persons were Sir George Carew and his friend Master Shakspeare. It was now so late an hour, that all the sober-minded townsfolk had taken them to their beds. It followeth that the place was hushed into a profound stillness, save where the noise of the two gossips spread itself, and the darkness of the night was of that impenetrable sort, nothing could be seen but here and there a stream of light from some easement wherein a fire still blazed, or a candle was kept burning, betokening, perchance, a late carouse, or the good dame's preparations to welcome to his comfortable hearth her absent bedfellow; or a door thrown open to admit of the departure of some merry party to their several homes, would, the whilst they were saying their parting courtesies on the threshold, illume the deep gloom of the whole neighborhood in a still more cheerful fashion.

The two persons, to whom allusion hath just been made, kept close together, conver-

sing in a low tone to each other, but returning, with much heartiness, the fair "good nights" they had of every one who passed them on their way. At their heels was a stately hound, who seemed to take no heed whatsoever of any thing or any one, but stalked along with as much affection of solemnness and dignity, as would have sufficed the goodliest justice 'o the peace that ever sentenced a sturdy beggar to the stocks.

The subject of their conversation was no other than the Earl of Essex, whose treasonable designs, after his abandonment of his government in Ireland, had become much talked of. Sir George Carew detailed to his friend the intrigues in which this vain and headstrong noble had been engaged, after he had been placed under arrest by the Queen's order.

"He got his liberty at last," added he, "but was not allowed to come to court, or near the Queen's person. These restrictions he could not stomach. His great heart would not take quietly the humility that was put upon him. He regarded those who were most in favor at court as his restless and remorseless enemies, and was ever saying some scurvy thing or another against them. His discontent grew greater every day, and he gathered about him a number of mischievous, restless busybodies, bold swordsmen, confident fellows, men of broken fortunes, and such as saucily used their tongues in railing against all men. They did him no good; but his worst adviser was one Cuffe, his secretary, a plotting dangerous knave, who had been with him in Ireland."

"Methinks I have heard of this man, Sir George, at Oxford. Held he not some appointment there?"

"O' my life, I know not well. All I know is, that he is the most pestilent, treasonable knave that ever carved out employment for the hangman, the which I make no manner of doubt he is now busily intent on, assisted by divers others whose names are in great repute. Foremost of these is your assured friend and patron, Lord Southampton."

"Nay, nay, Sir George Carew, this cannot be. Your intelligencer must have played you false!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, greatly excited. "I would pledge my life on his loyalty."

"Do nothing unadvisedly, friend Will," replied his companion. "The Privy Council know of a surety that he is engaged in a treasonable design, and, moreover, that he hath engaged his friend, Sir Charles Danvers, in the same desperate undertaking. In short, they have the names of all the con-

spirators, and are as well informed of their plans as they are themselves."

"I must to London, Sir George. I must away without loss of time. I am bound to save him. He shall not be sacrificed in this foolish business, an I have power to help him."

"Well said, Master Shakspeare," replied Sir George Carew, to his agitated friend. "It was mainly for this I sought occasion for privy speech with you. I knew with what affectionateness you do regard this young lord, nor am I ignorant of his worthy nature; therefore desired I he should have the aid of so trusty a friend in the perilous condition in which he hath placed himself. But, hush! What wild uproar is that?"

The two speakers stopped of a sudden and listened intently; but all around seemed wrapped in as deep a silence as darkness; and, whilst they tarried, Talbot put himself forward in the direction whence the rude sounds that so much startled Sir George Carew had come. It may readily be imagined that this noise proceeded from the woman's tailor and his merry gossip, who still pursued their mad pranks as riotously as ever. They had got to the rehearsing of certain strange feats of posturing, which they intended performing at the next Stratford games—an annual festival, in famous repute all over Warwickshire—that would be held in a day or so, twisting of their bodies in the oddest positions ever seen, to the extreme bewilderment of Dick and Tib, who glanced on the scene with a singular curious look, from a place of safety. Jonas stood on his head and hands, supporting Tommy Hart on his feet, whose head and body formed a sort of ring, the legs being round the neck, when, as they were deeply intent on keeping their unnatural posture, they suddenly heard a dreadful sort of sharp snapping noise. The eyes of both were at the same moment directed to the spot, and, to their extreme horror, they beheld, peering over the wicket, a horrible black visage, with eyes that looked to be of burning coals, glaring on them as though about to do them a terrible mischief. The lateness of the hour, joined to the fiendish aspect of their visitor, as it was seen in the ruddy firelight, looked a thousand times more unearthly from the singular positions in which they observed him, struck the hearts of both with a sudden and overwhelming fear, and, in an instant, Tommy Hart tumbled from his elevation, and he and his equally frightened gossip rolled over and jostled each other till they got to a distant corner of the chamber. There each strove,

with main and might, to get behind the other, uttering all manner of fearful cries in a low voice, and trembling in every limb. Dick and Tib and their associates seemed to share in their terror, for they got themselves as far as possible from the door—one cawed, the other mewed, and the rest yelped, as though they, too, were within an inch of being frightened out of their lives.

The once merry hatter had now sunk on his knees, as terribly out of conceit of mirth of any sort as a whipped turnspit, and commenced a strange, yet monstrous earnest sort of prayer, full of asseverations of the thorough honesty of his dealings to man, woman, and child, whilst the poor woman's tailor was kneeling behind him, engaged in a similar kind of devotion, but making very urgent confession of divers appropriations of small pieces of stuff, which he had neglected returning to his customers.

"An it please you, my lord," muttered the fear-struck hatter, scarcely daring to lift his eyes to the horrible object he addressed, "I am in no case for the society of your honorable worship; I am an exceeding humble, worthless poor varlet, unworthy to tie your honor's shoes. But here is my friend here, an your honorable worship pleases, as worthy a soul as ever broke bread—"

"Nay, I assure your noble worship," cried the other, with a wild kind of fervor, "I am a monstrous malefactor, that hath more sins to repent of than there are threads in a piece of cloth. It is this, my very excellent sweet gossip, you must needs be in quest of, for he hath such rare virtues—"

"Believe him not, I beseech you, good my lord," screamed out Tommy Hart in as loud a voice as he could use, "I have no more virtue in me than you may find in a withered radish. Jonas will do credit to your worship's judgment—Jonas is such admirable choice company."

"I am but an ass to Tommy here, an it please you, my lord," replied Jonas Tietape with equal energy—"there is not such an intolerable ass in all Warwickshire."

"Try him, an it please your worship. An you do not find him worth a score of such poor wittols as am I, I will give my head as a buttered-toast for the next hungry dog I meet."

How long this altercation might have continued I cannot take upon me to say, had it not been put to a sudden conclusion. The sole cause of it at that moment opened a pair of monstrous formidable jaws that, to the excited and terrified visions of the trembling posturers, looked to be of the size of a

church-door, at least, when fully extended. At this, Tommy Hart, with a cry of terror, made a desperate struggle to get behind the friend in whose praise he had spoken so movingly scarce a moment since, the which the latter seemed as desperately intent on not allowing, and began struggling fiercely, shouting murder at the top of his voice. The object of their terror closed his terrible fangs with a curious sound, that was anything but human; and, at the uproar it created in the two gossips, began a series of other sounds that were less human still—for beyond all manner of doubt they were—such as a dog uses when barking.

In all honesty, the horrible head peering over the wicket, that had so frightened the woman's tailor and his associate into the assured conviction the arch enemy had come to them on his devilish errand for one or both, was no other than that of Talbot, who, attracted by the noise the two were making during their performances, went straight to the house, and put his paws on the low door so that he could see all that was going on in the chamber. The singular attitudes of the posturers made him utter the low growl that attracted their attention; and, not being able to make out the nature of the eloquent addresses that were made to him, and, moreover, being somewhat inclined for sleep, he indulged himself in a yawn of more than ordinary length; and the outcry this occasioned so disturbed him, that he took to barking rather angrily.

The cry of "Murder?" made Master Shakespeare and Sir George Carew quicken their steps; and they arrived at the wicket just in time to witness the recognition of Talbot by the frightened gossips, who now laughed at their fears till the tears ran down their cheeks; and, whilst the merry hatter caressed his old acquaintance, Jonas took to his ordinary antics, and went whirling along the chamber, on his hands and feet, with more wantonness than ever, scaring his favorites from the snug places wherein they had been bewildered spectators of the strange scenes just described, and somewhat disturbing the gravity of Talbot, who could not refrain from an occasional bark. On Sir George and his friend coming up, the story of the fright Talbot had put them into was soon told, to the amusement, as it seemed, both of narrators and hearers; and, in a short time afterwards, Master Shakespeare and Sir George parted, with a few hasty words that seemed to be of deep import. The former, in an exceeding perturbed state of mind, made the best of his way to his cottage at Shottery, whilst Sir George

Carew returned to his own mansion ; and the two gossips, for a brief space longer, to their postures, their jests, and their bursts of joyous laughter at the recollection of the awful visit that had so hugely disturbed them.

CHAPTER XII.

As she goes, all hearts do duty
Unto her beauty ;
And enamored do wish, so they might
But enjoy such a sight,
That they still were to run by her side,
Through woods, through seas, whether
she would ride. BEN JONSON.

TABITHA hurried on with her companion as though with an exceeding desire to witness the goodly pageants of which rumor had spoken pretty loudly throughout Barbican, and perchance also with some particular eagerness to show to all of her acquaintance, in the first place, in what marvellous good company she was, and, in the second, what brave attire she could don for such an occasion.

Ever since she had heard from an intelligencer in whom she could put her trust, that Queen Elizabeth was to return on such a day to her good city of London, and, according to a fashion in excellent favor with her, was to be welcomed back with rejoicings and shows of all descriptions, she determined to play the part of the good woman, on as large a scale as possible, and, by every means in her power, endeavor to secure for herself the long-coveted station of wife to that very admirable, famous physician, Master Doctor Posset.

It was rare that Mistress Tabitha was seen in the streets with other male companion than Luuncelot Curthose, whose task it had often been, when his mistress stayed out nights in visiting any of her gossips at a distance, to march before her, as every dutiful apprentice was wont to accompany his mistress, with a lantern in one hand and a cudgel in the other : the one for lighting of her way, the other to be raised in her defence, in case of need. But Launce was now little thought of, save only for the consideration of the notable punishment that was due to him for the horrible monstrous torture he had put her to, which entered her mind when a smart twinge of pain occurred in the wounded foot. At all other periods, her thoughts, like her speech, had but one direction. She laughed and talked, occa-

sionally turning round to say something peculiarly gracious to her followers, and omitting nothing that could make herself appear as devoted to the wishes of her companion as she was pleasant and amiable.

The conduct of the Physician did not very clearly establish an opinion on the state of his feelings towards her, as satisfactory as she could have desired. He looked as lively as a superannuated ape, to which his mowing and chattering gave a marked resemblance. He never failed to laugh when it was expected he should ; and though there might be nothing absolutely lover-like in his behavior, there was certainly nothing to discourage the idea that at least a very friendly feeling existed. There was only one thing in his conduct Tabitha disliked. He kept continually turning round, even in the midst of her most powerful attacks upon his affections, to observe their followers. She fancied that the proceedings of his daughter with Leonard and John Hall, who were walking on each side of her, did not meet with his approbation. Although this might be very natural on his part, she liked not the indifference it manifested to her claims upon him.

After them came Millicent and the two young students—as it seemed, the other two still vying how most to gratify John Hall. With the girl every sentence was accompanied with a most seductive smile, and her betrothed seemed to heed a vast deal more the making of himself agreeable unto his male associate than unto the other. The young physician could not but appear pleased. Reserved as he was, and of so marvellous a gravity, he could not but feel the genial influence of two such persons anxious to give him all the contentation in their power.

They were followed by Monsieur Galliard and Mildred, each apparently on the exquisitest terms with the other. After these came Roger Chinks, old Poins, and Simon Petry, gossips almost from their cradles, who were so intent on dilating on the good qualities of the Earl of Essex, whose affairs then were much talked of by the citizens, as scarce to heed the vast crowd in which they had now got commingled.

Every one, gentle and simple, young and old, appeared to have donned their holiday tire in honor of their sovereign ; and a countless multitude of such, as gaily habited as their means would allow, were hastening along the narrow streets of the city ; the tankard-bearer's daughter elbowing past the alderman's wife, and the artificer's widow pushing before the poor gentlewo-

man, without regard to respect or precedence. Gay gallants were mixed up with the rascal sort; valiant commanders were thrust aside by unruly apprentices: and honest merchants were hustled by a pack of masterless vagrants, and the like worthless poor knaves.

The major part were intent on making the best of their way to the nearest point where the Queen's Highness was expected; but a very many were too busy to have such intentions. Of these, some were making preparations for a goodly bonfire, wherever the space admitted of it; and here there was a marvellous activity and running to and fro with faggots, and logs, and tar-barrels, to heap up for the expected blaze.

Along the whole line of road the owners of the better sort of houses were engaged displaying from their windows whatever store of tapestry or arras they were possessed of, which, stirred by the wind, did make a pretty show, out of all doubt. In almost every fresh turning were seen artizans using of their utmost diligence in the getting ready of some wondrous pageant: for these things, especially wherein fine Latin speeches were addressed to her—the Queen wonderfully affected. This day being the anniversary of her coronation, more than usual efforts were made to give her contentation in this way, and the utmost cunning of the times was taxed in producing allegorical shows of more scholarly sort than any that had hitherto been seen. The city authorities only allowed their zeal to be exceeded by their diligence; they had made the most magnificent preparations; yet, satisfied as they might be with them, they were too well aware of the variable humor of their royal mistress to await the result without some anxiety.

Whilst these more important matters were in hand, there was no lack of amusement ready for such as chose to partake of it. There was scarce a corner that had not its balled-singer, by whose stentorian lungs the superhuman qualities of their sovereign were insisted on in the most choice doggrel. Mountebanks took advantage of the continual thronging to endeavor to find a market for sundry excellent remedies for divers most potent diseases, which it was delicately hinted by them, good subjects should strive earnestly to rid themselves of. Here, conjurors swallowed fire; there, astrologers announced the telling of fortunes: here was a delicate puppet-show, just arrived from the court of Prester John; and there, a bear, of such capital sort for

the showing of sport, the Sophy had offered a thousand crowns for it from the owner to have it for his own particular pastime.

Noticing of these famous sights, and commenting on most, the party from Barbican kept pressing on. Of these the three gossips, who brought up the rear, took the least notice. Their attention seemed engrossed by political matters, and, after discussing the aspect of affairs at home and abroad, abusing of certain courtiers, and extravagantly lauding their favorite the Earl of Essex, it seemed as though they were about to take up with one of the most fruitful sources at all times of popular eloquence—grumbling.

“Gog’s wounds, it would be wondrous such things should be allowed!” exclaimed Roger Chunks, in a gruff voice. “Things are getting in so bad a case, I doubt hugely there will be honest living for any man, soon. The prices of whatsoever matters are most needed of us poor men, are nigh upon double what they were a score of years back.”

“Ay, neighbor, that I find to my cost,” observed Simon Peitry. “I cannot get me a pint of huffcap for less than a penny, which in my father’s time was to be had for a halfpenny at any ale-house within the walls. As for bracket and dagger ale, they have got to such a pestilent price, as have put them clean out of my drinking.”

“But it endeth not at the ale-house,” replied the lantern-maker, “else might it be in some way bearable. Here have I been obliged to raise the wages of my journeyman twopence a day more than ever was heard of since the craft of a lantern-maker came into exercise; and yet they have the horrible impudency to tell me they cannot keep soul and body together. Do not you, neighbor, remember that, within these thirty years, I might in this goodly city buy the best pig or goose I could lay my hand on for fourpence, which now costeth twelvepence? a good capon for threepence or fourpence? a chicken for a penny; a hen for twopence, which now costeth me double and triple the money? It is likewise, in greater ware, as in beef and mutton. Moreover, I have seen a cap for thirteenpence as good as I can now get for two shillings and sixpence of our good gossip, Mistress Thatchpole. Of cloth, ye have heard how the price is risen. Now a pair of shoes cost twelvepence: yet, in my time, I have bought a better for sixpence. Now I can get never a horse shoed under tenpence or twelvepence, when I have also seen the common price was sixpence.”

"Ay, marry," responded the leather-seller, "and hast marked, neighbor, the monstrous falling off there is in the goodness of whatever things we most need, notwithstanding of such exceeding charges? Now the lambswool I have tasted of late hath no more the true smack of such as I was wont to drink, no more than a score of years back, than has a draught of this conduit we are passing the flavor of muscadine. Hanging be too good for the cheating varlets who plunder us in this intolerable fashion."

In good sooth, neighbors, methinks you are somewhat too hasty in these your judgments in this matter," observed the spurrier. Doubtless is it that the prices of divers commodities have been raised to some extent since our youth: but it remaineth not merely in matters of victual; divers other things needed by us are not to be bought but at as high a price. Perchance, Neighbor Chinks, the selling of lanterns hath of late become more profitable than it used?"

"An if it had not," replied the lantern-maker, "I must needs have abandoned the trade."

"And in the selling of leather, there might also be larger gains," added the other.

"Body o' me, yes," answered Simon Pelytry, laughingly, to whom the preceding question had been addressed. "I had no need to grumble on that score, did not the villainous tapsters rob me of them."

"Then I pr'ythee say, where is the wit or honesty of complaining of the times?" asked Martin Poins quickly, yet with deep seriousness. "I marvel hugely you should lack that proper sense of religiousness, which would have made you perceive that this change in the times was a thing for which you should have been hugely grateful. Instead of being foolishly discontented at the highness of prices, you should have gone down on your knees, and have thanked God you lived when such were general."

The only reply the pious spurrier got was a sort of grunt from the surly maker of lanterns. The jolly dealer in leather made no other sign of having attended to the speech, than by putting his tongue in the corner of his cheek in a manner infinitely more significant than refined, and winking at his fellow-grumbler. At this instant, the attention of all the party was drawn towards Mistress Tabitha, calling to young Martin Poins to point out to him a pageant that seemed exceedingly to have struck her

fancy. Martin was no where to be seen. All had been so engaged upon their separate gratifications, that the boy had been entirely forgotten by them for some time past.

Many were the comments, and various the conjectures his disappearance occasioned. Mistress Thatchpole, in especial, appeared to take his absence much to heart, there being no end to her hopes and fears concerning of the dear child's safety. What looked to be most strange, the father seemed the least interested or alarmed, though known to be of a singular affectionate disposition. He knew Martin better than the rest, and could, had he chose, have made a shrewd guess as to his whereabouts. He contented himself, however, with expressing his conviction that there was no cause of alarm. This at last satisfied his anxious neighbor; and, after some exceeding strong assertions, that she should never know the least atom of comfort all her days should any harm befall her precious favorite, she was induced to resume her hold of the physician's arm, which she had dropped in the intensity of her concern, and the party proceeded on their course.

The crowd grew more dense as they advanced. The doctor began to find considerable difficulty in making a path for himself and his companion. The people were wedged together in countless multitudes, without the slightest distinction of worth or station. The windows and housetops were crowded with eager faces, turned in one direction, which was of course that by which the Queen's Highness was expected. But the party from Barbican had now nearly approached their destination, which was the house of a certain gossip and kinswoman of Mistress Tabitha's, well known to most of her companions as Dame Quiney, then living in the city in excellent repute both there and at court as a clear-starcher. The windows of her dwelling overlooked the road through which the expected procession was to pass, and one on the ground-floor had been set aside for the convenience of those now urgently pushing their way towards it.

In due time, after no small difficulty, they were so fortunate as to obtain access to Dame Quiney's dwelling; and, after a courteous welcome from an exceeding clean and still comely matron, wearing one of the very ruffs she was so famed for preparing for the Queen's Highness and the ladies of her court, they took their position at the large open casement, some sitting on stools and benches, and the rest standing up be-

hind. After seeing them all properly placed, their hostess retired, to look after other guests of hers.

It was now about the hour of noon. The day was none so bright at the first dawn of it, but suddenly the sun burst out with a marvellous cheerful aspect, that made the decorated streets and countless thousands in their holiday suits look wonderfully brave. In all that vast assemblage, there was scarce one face whereof the expression was not cheerfulness and content.

A famous commodity of debating was going on amongst the crowd, during the time Tabitha and her party were kept waiting; but it was suddenly put a stop to by distant shouts, that made every individual in the crowd break off what he was then intent on, and do all that in him lay to get a good view in the direction of those welcome sounds.

Every one was now restless with expectation. They who were in the streets were on tiptoe, striving to look over each others heads—the short deploring their want of height, and the tall wishing themselves to be very May-poles; whilst, from the windows and housetops, and indeed from all elevated places, the same efforts were made for the satisfying of the general curiosity. Anon the sound of trumpets caught the ear, and the shouting became louder. Whereupon, the crowd in the neighborhood of the party from Golden Lane showed greater restlessness in their movements, and more curiosity in their looks. And so it continued, with the addition of divers impatient yet loyal exclamations from all quarters, till the sound of the trumpets coming nigher and nigher, the shouts every instant increasing in loudness and the cries and movements of all around who were well placed for a view in the quarter to which every gaze was directed, gave good assurance that the Queen's Highness was approaching.

A short time, which to many seemed to grow to a marvellous length, and the imposing cavalcade that accompanied the Queen began to make its appearance. First, came trumpets and kettle-drums on horse-back; the performers whereof, in gay dresses almost covered with gold lace, appeared to be making the loudest music in their power. Then came a goodly company of the highest nobles and gentlemen of the land, on prancing palfreys gaily caparisoned. In the midst of these, and they were a very many, came a handsome caroche drawn by six horses, in the which were two or three persons, but conspicuous above

all a woman right royally apparell'd, the sight of whom seemed to make that vast multitude mad with very joy. Such shouting of good wishes, such throwing up of caps, such waving of handkerchiefs, it was scarce possible any human eye had ever seen before; all the whilst the lady so welcomed regarded everything with exceeding graciousness, inclined her head in grateful acknowledgment of the popular good-will, and more than once spoke her thanks in words of winning courtesy.

Bravely as she was clad, and gracious as she appeared, there could be no disguising that age had marked her features with many unpleasing memorials; besides which, her visage had a careworn and heavy look, that told of a heart ill at ease. In truth, she had just then many causes of disquietude in the aspect of affairs at home and abroad; but the conduct of her favorite, the Earl of Essex in his Irish government, and since his improper return thence, as it was continually represented to her, filled the aged beauty with more uneasiness than all the other things put together. She strove hard to disguise her cares and anxieties from her loyal subjects under a smiling exterior, but she could not conceal from herself that the arrow had entered into her soul, and her increasing moodiness and irritability had long since told to her attendants the increase in her sufferings.

In this manner Queen Elizabeth continued her progress, with such occasional stops as came of certain pageants, consisting of such dainty conceits in the way of the personating of allegorical and heathenish characters, as were considered most apt for the occasion.

Here came Time, to lay aside his scythe and hour-glass, and swear he had nought more now to do than to note, with infinite reverence, the peerless being on whom his poor eyes had been allowed to gaze. There Hercules put by his club, vowing that, although he had performed so many marvellous labors, to stand undazzled within the influence of such radiant beauty was of too much difficulty—therefore he would not essay it, but at an humble distance be ever at hand ready to put forth his puissance to the uttermost against any who should be daring enough to deny her exceeding exquisiteness of feature and supereminence of mind.

In one place, Faith, Hope, and Charity came forward to say that they had had nought to do on earth, since a princess had appeared, who, in her own proper person, made so fair a show of all their virtues, and every other it was possible to have: and, in

another, Neptune exhibited himself, with his trident and sea-horses, swearing most lustily that he had given up all empire of the seas, since its true and invincible ruler, the high and mighty Elizabeth, had put forward her pretensions to such sovereignty ; and a vast deal more of the like sort, spoken in most excellent sounding verse, and replied to by the Queen's Majesty in fair and pleasant speech.

To the monstrous delight of the immense multitude, congregated in every street, Queen Elizabeth proceeded, after this fashion, to Somerset House, where she intended to remain.

Mistress Tabitha Thatchpole and her party waited where they had placed themselves, rarely pleased with the sight they had had, till the crowd in the streets had so far diminished as to allow of their retracing their footsteps to Golden Lane, it never having been their intention to stay in Dame Quiney's house but sufficient time to see the pageant ; so, taking leave of the clear-starcher, who, to tell the truth, was right glad to be quit of them, she having persons of higher condition then staying with her, they bent their steps homeward. But, in so happy a mood were they—for even the old lantern-maker spoke and looked with some pleasantness—that they cared not for immediate returning, and, at the suggestion of the jovial leather-seller, proceeded to a quiet inn in Paternoster Row, to solace themselves after their fatigues with a tankard of choice ale. All the chambers seemed as full of thirsty customers as they could well be : and the drawers were running hither and thither, calling to this one, and answering that, and serving all as busy as bees in a hive. There was, the while, such a hum of voices as could scarce have been exceeded at the building of Babel.

With a great to-do, and not without much patience, and a word or two spoke by Simon Peltry to one of the drawers, an acquaintance of his—no marvel, for the thirsty leather-seller was as familiar with every drawer in London and Southwark as he might be with his own jerkin ; they were accommodated with a small table and the proper quantity of stools, and thereupon they, with a very reasonable heartiness, commenced paying their attention to the tankard.

This was well liked of each, and singularly so of the jolly leather-seller, who, whilst pronouncing his opinion on its merit, and giving its whole history, from the sowing of the grain and the gathering of the hops, to its present acquaintance with his throat, had such frequent recourse to his subject, that

few of the party knew of its worth, save through the medium of his commendations ; whereof, the consequence was, another tankard was ordered, of which a fairer division was enforced ; and, as they this way were led to understand the justice of their neighbor's commentaries, each began to be as eloquent as Simon Peltry.

Of John Hall, it is sufficient to state, he was not altogether unmoved. Whether the blandishments of the kind Millicent, or the friendly attentions of her betrothed, or the generous influence of the tankard, did most in removing that grave and somewhat studious air, that had so distinguished him, when leaving his mother's home, under the guardianship of that unmatched prudent guide, Simon Stockfish, we have no positive assurance, but it was easy to see he was exceeding well pleased.

Simon Peltry, in the meanwhile, was relating to such of the company as he could get to listen to him the particular history of every drawer who had been seen by any of his companions since they had entered the inn, for in such learning he had not his match all the world over. He could name not only the parents of each individual, but knew their gossips, and every thing they had said or done worthy of the telling. As for Mistress Thatchpole, she was in her element. It seemed to her that the little doctor was as attentive as though she had been his most profitable patient, and she fancied his looks were of a wonderful tender and devoted nature.

All at once the conversation took a turn towards Golden Lane ; and she, perchance, being more at home there than in any other subject that had been mentioned, cared no more for being a listener, and straight talked away as vigorously as the best. She entered at some length into her own history, not failing, with proper expressiveness, to state how well things were going on with her in the selling of caps and hats, and giving a full, perchance an over, valuation of the tenement that had been left her for the carrying on of her business. In short, she left nothing unsaid that could convey to her hearers the conviction that Mistress Tabitha Thatchpole, of Golden Lane, Barbican, was worth anybody's having, be he whom he might.

" Methinks that apprentice of yours doth not lack industry," observed Martin Poins.

" By my troth no," replied Tabitha, anxious, for especial reasons, to appear ready to speak kindly of every one. " He is no idler, I promise you. And, though I cannot but hesitate somewhat in telling you of it, as it may seem in some sort the showing of

a great vanity in me, he entereth into my service with such exceeding affectionateness, that he will allow of none assisting. Nay, so devoted is he, that of his own accord he pressed, with a monstrous earnestness I found it impossible to deny, that he should be left on this glorious day to look after the concerns of the shop, stating that I should enjoy myself all the more, as it was his wish, if I knew that my customers were as well looked after as though I were present."

Whilst Mistress Thatchpole's company were adding their several commendations to hers of this phoenix of an apprentice, it so chanced that a noise was heard of no little laughing and shouting in one of the adjoining rooms, and, amid the maddest uproar of mirth from many voices, they could easily distinguish the following sentences :—

"Out on her for a scurvy jade, say I!—But I cannot restrain mine honest mirth, when thinking what a fury the old tabby would be in, knew she I have set at nought her strict commands and threatenings in case of disobedience to keep within doors. But she is well served. I entreated to be allowed, as other 'prentices are, to make this a holiday, but all I got of my prayers was a rating—plague on her shrewish tongue!—so loud, I was nigh upon stunn'd by the fury of it; and, as for cuffs—methinks she taketh me for nothing better than a custard, that must needs have a constant beating to make it of any goodness. But pr'ythee join with me in a draught of huff-cap, to drink this Mother Brimstone a speedy meeting with her proper master and helpmate, Old Scratch."

Scarce had this speech ended, when, with a shout of riotous laughter, a party of nearly a dozen youths, seeming to be apprentices, burst into the chamber, and at the head of them, and out of all doubt the speaker of what hath just been stated, was no other than the phoenix, Lazy Launce. At the hearing of such rude phrases at such a moment, Mrs. Tabitha Thatchpole, quite forgetful of the amiable character she had been so earnestly endeavoring to assume, directly Launce made his appearance, flew towards him, shewing by her looks and manner, that neither this offence, nor that whereby her corn had suffered so terribly, would be allowed to pass without a signal punishment.

Doubtless he would have had a famous mauling, had not young Poins, who was one of the most boisterous of the party, as she came rushing with her utmost speed, thrust one of his companions towards her with such force, that they scarcely escaped coming to the ground together. Ere Tabitha could re-

cover herself, Launce, looking to be in as great a fright as ever he was in his life for all his big words, took but two steps to the door, and vanished out of the neighborhood as though the very helpmate he had proposed for his mistress was in full chase, at his heels.

CHAPTER XIII.

Here are none that can bear a painted show,
Strike when you wink, and then lament the blow;

Who, like mills, set the right way for to grind,
Can make their gains alike with every wind;
Only some fellows with the subtest pate,
Amongst us, may perchance equivocate
At selling of a horse, and that's the most.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

If we do prosper now, not we on Fate,
But she on us shall for direction wait.

THE GREAT FAVORITE.

It is a weary interlude
Which doth short joys, long woes include;
The world's the stage, the prologue tears,
The acts vain hopes, and varied fears;
The scene shuts up with less of breath,
And leaves no epilogue but death.

DR. HENRY KING.

THE principal chambers in Essex House were thronged with men of divers characters and conditions, but for the most part bearing in their several aspects an air of fierce determination and gloomy discontent. Amongst them were some of high lineage and good reputations, and divers of singular repute for ability in learning and in arms; but there were also present a vast number of gentlemen of poor fortunes and poorer characters; daring adventurers, who had nothing to lose but their lives, which they were ready to risk in any venture that promised to better their fortunes; and impoverished cast captains, who sought a desperate enterprise, somewhat out of revenge against certain persons in the government, by whom they fancied they had been scurvily treated, and somewhat in the hope of obtaining rich advantages, as had been held out to them if they assisted in the stirring game that was afoot.

There were signs of exceeding restlessness and noisy debate in the crowded chambers. Little knots of eager disputants kept together on the staircase, in the ante-rooms, and even in the state apartments, where the leaders of the party were in close and earnest debate. Although many bore upon them the appearance of discontented courti-

ers and poor soldiers, wearing of such bravery as their means would allow, albeit it was in many cases exceedingly worn and soiled, there were others who were dressed with a marked plainness. These latter were men of severe aspect and of formal manners ; rude in their bearing, loud of voice, and violent in their counsels ; in their outward apparel affecting the new religion, and in their behavior monstrously disaffected to the existing government. Amongst them were two or three who wore the garb of priests ; and these were, for the most part, engaged in loud discourse on the marvellous qualities of their noble patron, the Earl of Essex, and of the intolerable grievances that had been thrust upon him by certain ungodly wretches who poisoned the ear of the Queen's Highness against him.

The hubbub of voices, and the constant going to and fro of upwards of three hundred persons, gave to the scene an air of strangeness and confusion, to which the vast number of offensive weapons that lay here and there on the rich furniture of the principal apartments, and in every convenient corner, added greatly. Messengers were rapidly passing in and out, bringing reports to the leaders ; one was rudely shouting to his fellow afar off, and numbers were standing upon the carved benches and chairs, making their comments upon the strange scene and the chief actors in it.

At one corner of one of the suit of apartments, wherein the principal part of this assemblage were crowded, there were two persons, a little apart from the crowd ; the one, who looked to be a Puritan from the plainness of his suit, stood on an oak table of great strength, supporting himself by leaning against a massive cupboard, richly carved, that stood beside it ; the other, whose apparelling had a vast deal more of the gallant and the soldier about it, to which a patch over one eye and a well-bronzed complexion, were expressive additions, stood on a cane-backed chair almost at his elbow.—The first, notwithstanding a huge, rough beard, wore an aspect of honest plainness, and seemed to take a wonderful interest in the proceedings, though he said but little ; but the features of the other were expressive of more impudence than honesty, and his tongue wagged like the clapper of a village bell giving an alarm of fire, though it is much to be doubted his heart was in the cause he had embarked in.

"Now, I pray you, good Master Puritan," said the latter, whom the reader will presently recognize, "cast your eyes beneath the great window yonder. There are all my

excellent worthy friends and sworn brothers —persons with whom I am as intimate as I am with my sword, the which, to tell you the truth, is a rare one, the right Toledo.—Fore George, it is not long since it graced the thigh of the King of Spain."

"The speaker, finding the curiosity of his companion was not then to be drawn to so godly a weapon, proceeded—"Yes, there they are by this light. All of them look up to my judgment and vast experience in military matters, and had counsel of me but yesterday as to the conducting of this enterprise. He with the grey beard is Lord Sandys, as gallant a nobleman as any that lives—he is talking urgently to Lord Montagle (he with the slashed doublet) ; and Lord Rutland, another of my especial intimates, together with Sir Ferdinando Gorges—he that is governor of Plymouth—and Sir John Davis, surveyor of the ordnance, are listening and occasionally joining in the discourse. Next to Davis is John Lyttleton of Frankley, a Worcestershire man, not long since knight of the shire for that county, a person of great resolution and ability, my familiar and sworn gossip ; the person who is pulling him by the sleeve is Sir Gilly Merrick. It was he who, last night, bespoke the play of 'Richard the Second,' at the seeing of which were nearly all who are now in this action."

The Puritan, in a sort of snuffle, said something expressive of the iniquity of such performances ; but regarded the persons at the further end of the chamber with increasing earnestness.

"Fore gad, I forgot your misliking of plays," observed his communicative associate. But there is a group now a little to the right of those I have just been naming—these are of more moment than all the others. You know none of them, I doubt not, except by casual observance ; but, if you seek their notice, you will find no one so like to get it you as I, in regard of the great love they bear me for certain important services it hath been my good fortune to be able to render them." This hint not being taken any notice of, the speaker continued—"Now, mark you that stately gentleman, in the falling collar and ruff ; he in the plain russet suit, with the full beard, that looketh so restless and uneasily, and speaketh with so great a vehemency ; see how disdainfully flash his eyes ; note how proudly he beareth himself, like one grievously oppressed, and passionately desirous of having his revenge of his enemies. Well, that is no other than my Lord of Essex." Verily, he looketh to be a right proper

leader!" exclaimed the other, with that particular nasal twang they of the new religion chose to affect.

" By this sword, yes !" replied his companion ; " and of his soldier-like qualities few can speak so confidently as can I, who have been his companion in arms throughout all his campaigns, and, in truth, may be said to have been his sole teacher in what he knoweth of the art of war. But of this it doth not become me to speak. Some say he has moved in this action merely to oust his enemies, Cecil, Raleigh, Cobham, and the rest ; others assert he will change the commonwealth, and reform all abuses and disorders in it ; and divers are confident it is his intention to bring in King Jaines, of Scotland : but I, who am so deep in his confidence, could tell his meaning and objects more faithfully, chose I to do so ; but, of course, I am bound in honor to keep so great a secret."

The Puritan seemed to have nothing to say to a truth so evident ; indeed, his whole attention was directed towards the group round the Earl of Essex.

" He who is so busy with the Earl, writing at the table before him," continued the other, " is my lord's secretary, one Henry Cuffe. He affects a clownishness and honest bluntness of manner, but he is shrewdly suspected of having secret ambitious ends, with a marvellous disposition towards deep plotting and far-sighted policy. The Earl once dismissed him his service, assured his sharp and importune infusions would one day prove his ruin ; but he hath been so politic in his behavior as to be again taken into his lord's favor, and hath the credit of being the main-spring of this enterprise. On the other side stands one of a different spirit. He is my Lord Southampton, another of my especial familiars, and he is leaning on his friend Sir Charles Danvers, who hath been drawn by love for him into this action."

The Puritan's apparent deep interest in the group he was observing was, at this moment, interrupted by the loud shouting of the name of Sir Ferdinand Gorges, and great commotion was created amongst the conspirators when it was known that Sir Walter Raleigh was waiting to have speech with him on the river. The Earl of Essex seemed to put himself into a rage at the first mention of Raleigh's name, but allowed Sir Ferdinand to see what was wanted of him, although the Earl had given strict orders that none of the company should leave the house. As Sir Ferdinand took his departure, he was counselled to seize Raleigh,

and bring him in prisoner, which it was thought by some it was his intention to do.

Scarce was the stir which this occasioned at an end, when a still more violent commotion was occasioned by one coming in and declaring that divers persons of state from the Queen's Highness were at the gates demanding admittance. This begat a great confusion of opinions, some shouting to keep them out, and others to have them in ; and, at last, orders were given to let them into the courtyard by the wicket, but not to allow any persons of any sort, to have admittance with them. All now hurried down into the courtyard, amongst others the Puritan and his companion ; the latter, from some reason, kept close to the other ; and, believing him, as it seemed, to have little or no knowledge of the distinguished characters with whom they were associated, he continued his information as to their several names and characters. From him the Puritan learned that the personages the conspirators were now so eagerly thronging around were the Lord Keeper Egerton, the Earl of Worcester, the Lord Chief Justice, and Sir William Knowles, the comptroller of the Queen's Household ; all of whom were considered friends of the Earl of Essex, the latter being his uncle.

They walked uncovered, with a dignity worthy of their office, through the crowd, most of whom regarded them with looks of malice and mischief, till they reached to where Essex stood with a proud and haughty bearing, surrounded by his principal associates, also uncovered. The Lord Keeper spoke first, and in an audible voice delivered a message from the queen, stating she had sent them to know the meaning of so great a concourse of people in that place, and promising, if they had any griefs to complain of, they should be heard and remedied. This conciliatory speech on the rash and headstrong Earl had no other effect than to make him the more intent on his desperate purpose, thinking in his own weak mind it proceeded from fear ; and he loudly and passionately replied, in confused assertions, that his life was in danger from the plotting of his enemies, that his handwriting had been forged, and that, seeing he could get no redress, and was threatened with the horriblest mischiefs, he and his friends had resolved to defend themselves. This speech was received by those around him by loud acclamations.

Thereupon the Lord Chief Justice stated that, if any such matters were attempted or intended against the Earl, it was fit he should declare it ; they would report it faithfully to her Highness ; and he could not fail

of finding a princely indifference and justice on her part. On this the Lord Southampton spoke, describing his having been lately set upon by Lord Grey of Wilton, sword in hand, when he was quietly riding along one of the public streets, unexpecting and unprepared for such an attack ; to which the Lord Chief Justice replied that justice had been done in that matter, the offender having been sent to the Fleet Prison. This answer might have sufficed ; but there were those in the courtyard who, for especial reasons, misliked any thing approaching a reconciliation in this stage of the business.

The Lord Keeper, noting the mood of the conspirators, asked Essex to explain his griefs privately, since he would not in public, adding he doubted not being able to give or procure him satisfaction. But this was not in accordance with the intentions of many of those around, who interrupted him with great clamor, shouting to the Earl :—“ Away, away, my lord ! They abuse your patience ! They betray you ! They abuse you ! You lose time ! ” Whereupon the Lord Keeper put on his hat, and said to the Earl with a louder voice :—“ My lord, let us speak to you privately, and understand your griefs ;” and then, turning to the noisy crowd, with a grave and severe aspect, added :—“ I command you all upon your allegiance to lay down your weapons, and depart.”

This command, however, suited not with the humor of any of the conspirators to obey, and the chiefs looking on it as an attempt to draw their followers away from them, took it up with much appearance of disdain. Essex and his friends put on their hats, and turned away into the house ; and, the queen’s officers, thinking he made that movement to confer with them privately, followed as they could. But there was a great outcry made at them, and on passing through the principal suite of rooms, some shouted :—“ Kill them ! kill them ! ” Others, of a less sanguinary turn, cried :—“ Shut them up ! ” “ Keep them as pledges ! ” This latter advice Essex thought fit to follow, for, when they arrived at his book-chamber, he gave orders to keep them fast there, and gave them in charge to three resolute fellows, who stood at their door with muskets charged and matches lighted.

It was during the confusion consequent upon this scene, that the Puritan made divers efforts to shake off his gossiping companion, who, nevertheless, continued to press upon him, introducing of himself with many flourishes as Captain Swashbuckler, and proffering to teach him the utmost cunning of fence for an exceeding moderate re-

ward ; and, when this was impatiently negatived, kept pressing on him with still more urgency to buy the King of Spain’s trusty Toledo at the small sum of ten crowns. At this the Puritan turned round fiercely, and, with a look that made the noble captain feel exceedingly uncomfortable for a good hour after, swore, with a monstrous oath, that if he dared to follow him a step further, or address to him another word, he would slit his nose to the bone. Ere this valiant gentleman could recover from so unexpected a mode of address, the Puritan was urging his way rapidly through the noisy crowd, as though to overtake my Lord Essex ; but it was not the Earl he sought, but the Lord Southampton, in whose ear he unperceived whispered something which made the young nobleman turn round with a start of intense astonishment. He looked bewildered for a moment ; then, making a sign for the Puritan to follow him, he opened a door, within which both quickly disappeared, and instantly fastened it to prevent intrusion.

“ In the name of all that’s marvellous, Will, what bringeth thee here in this guise ? ” exclaimed Lord Southampton, evidently in a monstrous wonder at the appearance of the person before him.

“ A good errand, my dear lord, and one that admitteth of no delay,” replied the other ; but in a voice as different from the snuffling drone with which the same person but a few minutes since, addressed himself to the cast captain, as is a nightingale’s from an owl’s. “ You are on the high road to destruction. The net is spread for you, and all those who have joined this rash and ill-arranged enterprise, and you cannot help falling into it. I pray you, my lord, hearken to one who never advised you but for your good. Move no more in this foolish business, but escape from it whilst there is safety. This I will secure at the hazard of my life.”

“ I thank you heartily, Master Shakespeare ? ” exclaimed his young patron, pressing his hand affectionately. “ I am well assured of your heartiness to serve me at all times, but I am so bent on this action, I cannot give it up ; and, as for the desperate character you give it, be assured you have been misinformed”—then, observing some sign of impatience in the other, added :—“ Know you not that Essex counteth upon a hundred and twenty earls, barons, and gentlemen of his party ; that the citizens of London are with him heart and soul ; and that Sir Thomas Smith, one of the sheriffs, is to support him with a thousand trainbands, of whom he hath the command ? By

this hand, sweet Will, we cannot but prosper. We are sure of success."

"Nay, such is out of all possibility," replied Master Shakspeare. "I have certain intelligence that every preparation has been made to defeat the objects for which you are striving so ill-advisedly, and they have been made with such judgment that the issue cannot be doubted. The Lord Mayor hath been warned of your projects, and an infinitely stronger force than any you can get together is on its march to overpower you, and make you all prisoners. Let me beg and pray of you, my dear friend and patron, to abandon this mad scheme at once. I have arranged a plan for your escape that cannot fail. I entreat you to save a life so dear to me!"

"You must be misinformed, Will!" exclaimed the young lord, much moved. "I am greatly beholden to you for your urgency to do me service, but in this matter it cannot be. Mine own grievances have not been few or trifling. I have endured a long imprisonment, for no greater fault than marrying for mine own liking. I was degraded from my command as Master of the Horse, for no reason of any sufficiency; and I have been attacked in the open streets, with no more ceremony than might be used to a common cut-purse."

"I know it all, my lord," answered his companion, urgently. "You have good cause for complaint, there cannot be a doubt. But your appearing in arms against your sovereign, the which you are now doing, is of all things the surest road to prejudice your good cause irretrievably. Once more, my dear lord, I pray and beseech you to take heed whilst it is time. Leave this wretched plot to the wretched fate that must overtake it. Pardon hath been promised you from a sure hand. Quit this place, and allow me the singular sweet pleasure of seeing the truest friend man ever had, out of the most imminent and terrible danger that could touch him."

"Nay, Master Shakspeare, it cannot be," said my Lord Southampton, resolutely, yet much affected by his friend's urgent entreaties. "Methinks I am bound in honor to see my kinsman through this perilous action of his, if perilous it be. Come weal or woe, I must share it."

In vain did Master Shakspeare strive to move his resolution, by showing he could do the Earl no good by involving himself in his guilt. He would hearken to no counsel of the sort, but commenced urging his friend to secure his own safety as quickly as he

could. But Master Shakspeare had too great a love for the youth who had shown to him so much nobleness of soul, and resolved at least to watch over his safety throughout the adventure.

Lord Southampton did again and again urge him to put himself out of danger, but the other roundly stated that, an he would not escape with him he must share his fortune, for he could not reconcile himself to leaving so estimable choice a friend to certain destruction. It was useless wasting time in such a debate, with natures so determined; so at last they made out of the room as privily as they had entered, and mingled unnoticed with the crowd, who were now hurrying out of the house; the Earl having set himself at the head of two hundred of the boldest of his followers, who were sallying forth with the intention of raising the city.

But a force less likely to do any essential service in so stirring a business there could not well be. Few were in any way provided as soldiers, the greater part having no weapons but their rapiers, and no defence but their cloaks wrapped about their arms. Nevertheless, they sallied forth full of confidence; the which was greatly increased by their being joined by one or two small parties, among whom were the Earl of Bedford, the Lord Cromwell, and a few other persons of distinction.

My Lord Southampton made his way to his kinsman, and the pretended Puritan kept as close at his heels as he could get. The party entered the city at Ludgate, preceded by the Earl, shouting lustily, "For the Queen! For the Queen! A plot is laid for my life! England is bought and sold to the Spaniards!"—the which none doubted would send every man and apprentice who heard it, with their weapons ready, eager to swell their ranks; but, to the surprise and consternation of all, not one person joined them. Devoted as the citizens were to Essex, he could not account for this utter desertion of him. In vain he repeated his cry as he proceeded—every house was as quiet as though the plague had swept away all its inmates: and neither man nor boy was to be seen.

The conspirators liked not this appearance of things at all, as was evident from their blank visages; but when, on going through Cheapside, towards Fen Church, and arriving at Sheriff Smith's house, where such mighty succors were expected, they found every dwelling closed and apparently deserted, many began to repent them of joining a plot so badly supported.

"Where is the Sheriff?" cried the Earl. "Let him bring muskets and pistols. It is for the good of the Queen, and for you all, my masters; for I am credibly informed, out of Ireland, that the kingdom of England is sold to the Spaniards."

Alack, no Sheriff was to be seen. He had withdrawn from his house by a back door, and hastened to the Lord Mayor. Essex entered his dwelling faint unto death. His folly and madness seined now for the first time placed properly before him; but he made a struggle to disguise his feelings by calling boisterously for refreshments, and linen to shift himself, for the intenseness of his anxiety had caused him to sweat at every pore.

The faces of the principal conspirators wore an uneasy expression, which did not lessen when word was brought that Lord Burleigh (Cecil's elder brother), and Gethick Garter, King at Arms, with a few horse, had entered the city, and had proclaimed Essex and his adherents traitors; and that the Earl of Cumberland, and Sir Thomas Garard, Knight Marshal, made a like proclamation in other parts of the city. It was then that Master Shakspeare drew his young patron on one side, and urged him, with increased eloquence, to provide for his safety; but the young nobleman had too gallant a spirit to allow of his abandoning his friend when his fortune looked desperate: nevertheless, he very affectionately entreated of his attached friend to endanger himself no longer by remaining with him, but this the other would not hear of, still hoping to be able to free him from the perilous condition in which he had placed himself.

Presently, my Lord Essex started off with his followers, thoroughly hopeless of doing of himself any benefit, yet not so despairing as to give up the attempt. He called upon the citizens to arm, and assured them that England was sold to the Infanta of Spain; but not one obeyed his summons, or took any heed of his intelligence. His followers were now leaving him rapidly; and, when it became known that the Lord Admiral, with a strong force, was hastening to attack them, desertion became still more frequent.

After a brief consultation, it was decided that the conspirators should return to Essex House as speedily as they could, and obtain their pardon by the release of the queen's officers there imprisoned. Hearing that the gate at which he entered the city was now well guarded, Essex sent forward Sir Ferdinando Gorges alone, to release the Lord

Chief Justice, and make the best terms he could, and took his way with his company by Paul's; but at the West Gate they were stopped by a chain drawn across the street, having pikemen and musqueteers to defend it. The Earl drew his sword, and ordered his followers to fall on. Lord Southampton obeyed the command eagerly, and the pretended Puritan started forward to endeavor to guard him from harm. A skirmish ensued, and one or two were killed and wounded on both sides, but Essex was repulsed, and a shot through his hat showed how near he had been to add to the list of mischances. He was allowed to turn off to Queenhithe unpursued, where he and his company took boats, and in due time landed at Essex House.

When the Earl arrived within his own dwelling, he and the rest were greatly astonished to find that Sir Ferdinando Gorges, out of a care of his own safety, had released the four prisoners, and had gone with them by water to court. Essex had now no hope, save in the remote one of the Londoners coming to his relief. He felt confused and distracted by his danger, burnt whatever papers might compromise him, and gave directions for fortifying his house, intending to defend it to the last extremity. He had little time for consideration. He found it invested with a force likely to overpower all opposition. On the land side were the Earls of Cumberland and Lincoln, the Lords Thomas Howard, Grey, Burleigh, and divers others of note, with a strong force of horse and foot; whilst the garden was filled with the Lord Adminal, his son Lord Effingham, Lord Cobham, Sir John Stanhope, Sir Robert Sidney, Sir Fulke Greville, and a sufficiency of foot-soldiers preparing to attack it on the river side.

Whilst the majority of the conspirators were overwhelmed with consternation at these preparations, increased by the fright of certain ladies who were amongst them, Sir Robert Sidney came, by the Lord Admiral's order, to summon them to surrender. But some of them had spirits worthy of a better cause.

"To whom?" cried Southampton, boldly. "To our enemies? That would be running headlong to destruction. To the Queen? That were to confess ourselves guilty. Yet, if the Lord Admiral will give us hostages for our security, we will appear before the Queen; if not, we are, every one, resolved to die in our defence."

To this spirited speech, the Lord Admiral returned for reply, that conditions were not to be propounded by rebels, nor hostages

given to them; but he informed Essex that he would permit his Countess, and Lady Rich, his sister, and their waiting gentlewoman, to go out. The earl took this as a favor, but asked an hour or two to fortify the place, by which they should go forth. This was readily granted.

"Now, my lord," whispered Master Shakspeare to his young patron, seizing opportunity for doing so unobserved, "prythee, be persuaded to your good. Your cause is lost, as I full well knew it would be, and you cannot do yourself, or any other, the slightest benefit by clinging to it. Escape is still open to you. Trust yourself to me, I pray you, and I doubt not being able to bring you off scathless even now."

"Thanks, sweet Will, a thousand times," replied Lord Southampton, eagerly. "But, as I wanted to partake of Essex's good fortune, methinks it would not be well in me to shrink from sharing his bad."

His friend intreated and prayed, and used every argument of force, but the young lord was not to be moved. Master Shakspeare knew not now what course to adopt. He was loath to leave him to the sure destruction he was courting, and saw no prospect of advantage in remaining to share the fate of those by whom he was surrounded. As for the conspiracy, he hated it with all his soul; and for those engaged in it he had no sympathy, save only in his generous young patron, for whom he felt so deep an interest, he could not be induced by any consideration for his own safety to leave at so perilous a moment.

All this time, Essex and a few other of the leaders strove to keep a good face on the desperateness of their fortunes. Preparations were made for a vigorous defence, and divers talked of dying sword in hand, as became their quality. But most were wild with affright, and even the Earl acted in a confused violent manner, as though he knew not what to be about. Now he abused the citizens as a base people, and boasted he could take the whole city with four hundred men; anon he threatened to force his way through his enemies, and seek to escape with his followers to Ireland; and then he spoke of the goodness of his cause, with a great show of bravery, and seemed to find consolation in its miscarriage. But all this vaporizing ended in nothing. The conspirators, before the time had expired, had agreed to surrender upon conditions; and when the Lord Admiral would agree to none, they were fain to do without, and presently they gave up their weapons, and were taken into custody.

It is presumed that the assumed Puritan had some understanding with the Lord High Admiral, or other great person, for he managed to get himself at large, when all, in whose company he had been, were proceeding to their prisons; but, in the first moment of his freedom, he resolved to use it for the advantage of the gallant and excellent young nobleman, to whom he felt himself so largely indebted, and was assured such would not be entirely profitless.

CHAPTER XIV.

Break, Fantasy, from thy cave of cloud,
And spread thy purple wings;
Now all thy figures are allowed,
And various shapes of things;
Create of airy forms a stream,
It must have blood and nought of phlegm;
And though it be a waking dream,
Yet let it like an odor rise
To all the senses here,
And fall like sleep upon their eyes,
Or music in their ear.

BEN JONSON.

TIME, in his steady flight, seeth many changes, but rarely any more marked than such as were created in the period that elapsed betwixt the last chapter and the present.

The strange and powerful sway of those melancholic humors which had visited Master Shakspeare with such uncontrollable vehemency ever since the death of his sweet young son, appeared now to have gathered such head, that, when his thoughts travelled that way, he seemed quickly to lose all consciousness of surrounding circumstances, and to give up every sense to the consideration of the huge grief that preyed upon his spirits. What this grief might be, none knew. None even guessed that a gentleman, so prodigal with his pleasant jests, when surrounded with proper company, was, when left to his own sad thoughts and feelings, the very miserablest wretch that can be conceived.

Frequently was it that he looked to be overpowered with a heaviness that wrapped him all around like a shroud, and, from his aspect, there might be read an anguish that was wont to probe him to the quick. Could it arise solely from a consideration of the great loss his affections had sustained by the death of the youthful Hammet? Could it be occasioned solely by the exceeding unsatisfactory nature of his domestic affairs? Might it arise from disappointed ambition—

loss of friends—or deficiency of worldly wealth? Or, did it proceed from the recollection of some offence of very monstrous evil, the consideration whereof smote him terribly? Hamnet's death, of a surety, was an intolerable blow to his happiness; but, since the doleful day it happened, Time, the sure alleviator of human affliction, had exercised his reconciling influence, and closed, though it could never entirely heal, the wound it had made. Philosophy, perchance, did something towards banishing all useless regrets; but philosophy hath but a small hold upon the heart of a doating parent, from whom the object of its infinite love hath been untimely snatched away.

There was much in the state of his home, which, to one of quick sensibility, like Master Shakspeare, might have afforded most intolerable reflections. That any of his ambitious views had failed in fulfilling their promises, is very much to be doubted, seeing the position he had gained in society by the proper influence of his own greatness. Of loss of friends he might complain. His royal patroness, who had held him in such honorable estimation throughout his career, had died full of years and glory, but of a heart broken by vain regrets for the loss of her unworthy favorite, the Earl of Essex, who had perished by the hand of the headsman for his treasonable practices. His still more generous friend, the young Earl of Southampton, had been kept a close prisoner, for his share in Essex's treason, up to the Queen's death: a worse fate would have attended him, had not the loving friend who strove so earnestly to get him out of the conspiracy, employed all-powerful appeals for the saving of his life. He had received certain intelligence that another of his estimable friends, Sir Walter Raleigh, was like to be in as pitiful a case as my Lord Southampton, from the coming of the Scottish king to the throne of these realms, in whom the very strongest prejudices against Sir Walter had been artfully raised by his rivals, Cecil and Essex.

Therefore, loss of friends might have gone some way towards exciting melancholy humors. Yet was Master Shakspeare so richly off in this respect, the few who were taken away were not like to be missed so greatly as to throw so thick a gloom over his spirits as had oppressed them. But, as to the only other cause we have hinted at—what offence could there be in one of so honorable a way of living that could touch him so nearly as the hidden cause of his huge trouble appeared to do? We doubt there could exist anything of the sort.

Nevertheless, Master Shakspeare had a heart so ill at ease, no man would have envied him, could he have known what an infinite lack of comfort he possessed.

But who could have guessed he had so much as the slightest uneasiness of any sort? In whatever play chanced to be before the audience, he so forgot himself in the performance of his part, that the spectators might reasonably enough have judged him to have nothing in his own nature to complain of, or regret, of sufficient import to call him from his feigning for one minute. In the company of his brother-players, and all the nimble wits and learned spirits with whom he associated, he looked to be of so happy a mind, he displayed ever so prodigal an abundance of pleasant thoughts and admirable witty jests, and was at all times so ready to add to, rather than share in, the general entertainment, that few who observed him could have thought of saying, "This gentleman hath griefs. He is distracted with trouble. He is as sick at heart as a man who hath not a hope in the world."

This unhappy gentleman, then, for so methinks we must needs consider him, sat in his lodging, in the Clink Liberty, in a deep fit of profound abstraction, his head resting on his hand as he leaned upon the table, and his noble visage wearing an aspect so sad and woe-begone, the feeling that had caused it evidently lay as deep in the heart as it well could. Before him were many papers and books, and implements of writing, but they seemed to be thrust on one side, as though the owner cared not to have aught to do with them. Amongst the papers was one which appeared to have been recently written. It seemed at first to be fragments of verse; but, on a closer look, these would be found to be divers small poems, much affected by the writers of that period, under the name of Sonnets. They were thus entitled:—

A NEW PARADISE OF DAINTY DEVICES.

I. PLANETARY INFLUENCE.

A radiant star within th' empyrian dwelt;
It stood confessed a glorious Cynosure,
Shedding a light around so bright, so pure,
That as I gazed, with throbbing heart I knelt,
"Oh, would," quoth I, "I might thy rays secure!"
(Marvel not I such covetousness felt
With such temptation) Ah! those starry beams
Had shed their beauty on another's dreams.
Yet deep within my heart I nurtured still
The love that fed upon its rosy streams—

Still hoped, still prayed for it with eager will,
And turned away from all the shining wealth,
That wo'd me oft from Heaven's sapphire hill,
That one proud star to idolize by stealth.

II. A COMPARISON.

Behold the jewel-hunter, searching well,
With a most curious eye, the mountain-tops,
Each rock, and ravine, cleft, and hidden cell,
Where from the soil the shining treasure
drops—
He suddenly with admiration stops,
As if entranced by some secret spell;
For naught of emerald, or amethyst,
Or costly stone, that his experience knew
With such bright sheen, or with so rich a hue,
Dazzled his gaze on fairest ear or wrist,
As doth a gem now flashing on his view :
Enriched thus, thus wondering I exist.
Thus found I thee, and in my loving sight
Art thou my perfect, matchless chrysolite.

III. THE SOUL'S LONGING.

I dreamt a dream of marvellous good intent,
The harbinger (would 'twere !) of coming
bliss ;
And thou, fair seer, shalt tell me what it meant,
For thou alone canst well interpret this.
Methought an angel had from Heaven been
sent,
Whose starry wings the air seemed proud to
kiss ;
Quoth he, " Thy struggles have not been in
vain,
And for thy suff'rings passed, name now thy
gain—
What thy soul yearns for, say, and all is
thine."
Then not a moment's space did I refrain
From uttering longings, precious as the mine,
Countless as motes within the glad sunshine ;
For beauty, honor, in the first degree ;
For all things that are excellent—FOR THEE !

IV. THE TRUE PHENIX.

In the old time, as ancient bards rehearse,
In many a legend of barbaric verse,
Where Araby exhales her spicy breath,
There came a wondrous bird, but rarely seen ;
That drew a new existence from its death,
Whereat, doubtless, the reader marvelleth.
This wonder therein scarce such time had been
A pile of goodly incense to have laid,
When there arose a fierce, consuming fire
That burned it utterly—which did not fade,
Ere a new bird sprung from the funeral pyre !
Love is to me the Phœnix poets mean,
Which in its sweets a flaming bed hath made,
Whence it doth new and perfect life acquire.

V. THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM.

The pilgrim who, with weary feet and slow,
Travels his sacred journey anxiously,

Measuring, with a self-inflicted woe
And earnest pray'rs, that heed not pang or
thro'e,
Each step he taketh, feels and acts as I,
Who, having set myself a pilgrimage
Unto a shrine of pure excellency,
Do tread on thorny ways, and constant wage
A warfare with myself—a sharp infliction—
A sense of some most grievous direction
Unworthy of the goodness I have songht.
Say in what moving terms, what passionate
diction,
Shall I, sweet saint ! thine ear and heart engage,
To be absolved in feeling and in thought.

VI. A GREAT OFFENCE GREATLY PUNISHED.

The sun hath drawn his curtain in the West,
Where the tired hours do chaunt his lullaby ;
And Heaven's Argus eyes now watch the rest
In which the weary world doth calmly lie.
The blossoms now their odorous alms deny,
Folded in dreams on Nature's bounteous breast.
The nightingale, nor time nor tune doth keep—
E'en the rude winds, bound in their caverns
deep,
Murnur their vespers with a holy care.
All things in earth and heav'n seemed hushed
in sleep,
All things save I—I no such blessing share.
Punished like him who stole th' immortal fire
A vulture's beak my vitals seems to tear—
Fit recompence for those damned by such proud
desire.

Whether any passage in the writer's life of some singular deep import is marked out in the foregoing poems must be left to the consideration of the sagacious reader. It may be thought they appear to indicate an attachment on the part of the inditer of these sonnets to some fair creature of the other sex very far above him in rank, which had been the cause to him of exceeding trouble both of heart and of mind. Nevertheless, it may be looked upon merely as a device of the imagination, which hath in it no reality of any sort, the poet having, in the exercise of his vocation, fancied a mistress under the circumstances related, whereof both circumstances and sentiments had no other origin in his fruitful brain.

Of these two views, the reader may incline to either. But we will obtain for him the perusal of another paper from the same source, which perchance may assist his judgment. This was entitled after the following fashion :—

THE GROWTH OF LOVE.

In those warm climates nearest to the sun
The flow'rs and fruits a wondrous nurture
show ;

The breezes fan them, and their part is done,
The sunbeams kiss them, and they bud and blow.
So 'tis with love in this warm heart of mine:
It springs at once to highest perfectness;
It blooms as sunny looks upon it shine,
And the fruit ripens 'neath the first caress.

A DOUBLE ENCHANTMENT.

Within those orbs a trembling radiance dwells,
Full of strange charms, and soul-enthralling spells;
Whilst round those tempting lips such magic lies
As overpow'rs th' enchantment of thine eyes.
Yet still the witcheries of thy gaze I seek,
Still own the smiling bondage of thy cheek;
But if one spell the other should eclipse,
Oh, bind me in the magic of thy lips!

Of a surety, if the sonnets do not speak sufficiently of love, there must needs be enough of it in the sugared poems the reader hath just perused. But it may be advanced that in them there may chance to be no more of reality than in the other. For mine own part, I am inclined to the belief that the writer of each and all these poems was in earnest when they were written by him, and that he hath therein figured out his own particular thoughts and feelings regarding an individual by whom they had been powerfully excited under circumstances obscurely hinted at in one of the sonnets.

Nor is there any thing improbable in entertaining such a view of the matter. At an early stage in his career, eminently qualified as he was both by appearance and unparalleled gifts of mind to please the eye and captivate the heart of any fair creature disposed to be enamored of such qualities, his prominence in the public gaze, under the double advantage of an admired player and admirable writer of plays, could scarce fail of giving ample opportunity for some doting nature of this sort to regard him with a sweet yet dangerous sympathy. It is the natural disposition of passion to level distinctions and smooth obstacles of the difficultest kind; and it was no unusual thing, in the age sought to be pictured in these pages, for a gentlewoman of high estate and lineage to give the entire devotedness of an uncalculating and, alas! unthinking affection, to some individual of the other sex, whose natural or acquired gifts were in her estimation infinitely preferable to fortune, birth, and the like estimable qualities.

That the development of such a sympathy took place clandestinely is rather to be deplored than wondered at. The obliga-

tions the young poet had already contracted must have rendered the entertainment of any feelings of the sort an offence not to be justified: but we are fearful that passion hath no considerations for what is strictly creditable and honest, and that, however excellently disposed in other respects, a youth, scarce twenty, full of the irrepressible yearnings that form so prominent a part in the influences which do commonly govern the humanity of all the higher order of intellects in early manhood, is not to be expected to withstand so powerful a temptation as is presented to the senses in the kindling glances of a fair creature of exquisite loveliness, forgetful of differences of degree, and indeed of whatsoever should most rule the conduct of one of her condition, in an uncontrollable admiration of him and his works.

The love of woman is the exquisitest intoxication under all circumstances, to any man of truly manly feelings, but when the most complete self-abandonment is evidenced in her love, with the most earnest idolatry, what man of woman born is there who could resist her affection?

The young poet, in whom love is the very breath of his being, and whose noblest thoughts and feelings can be nurtured only by intimate communion with the many admirable sweet qualities a loving woman possesses, of a surety is the very last person in the world to withstand such temptation. Tender looks, passionate sighs, and delicious smiles, can scarcely be aimed at him, without exciting a world of fond tumultuous hopes, and entrancing dreams, that make him at once a worshipper and a slave, impelling the current of his thoughts in one direction, with a maddening eagerness that leapeth all boundaries, overcometh all obstructions, dangers, and difficulties, and heedeth nothing of any sort but the one object to which it is directed; and that give to all the visible world around a voluptuous coloring of the like glowing nature as that with which the said looks, sighs, and smiles have tinged his every sense.

Although it may be too much to expect one thus circumstanced—to say nought of the cruel disappointment by which his domestic peace had been made shipwreck, which could but exert a powerful influence towards the same conclusion—to hold himself aloof from the enticements of passion when coming in so flattering a guise, yet was he exactly of that well-disposedness which, when he recovered the proper exercise of his sense of justice, would see the monstrous mischiefs that could not help

coming of his allowing of such temptation, and would lament, with an intolerable sense of misery, his own unworthiness. For what infinite evils might not result from giving way to such enticements !

It cannot be denied that there are instances in which deception, even in the highest places, sit so easily upon those by whom it is worn, that it would seem altogether superfluous for a man to trouble himself with any regretful feelings for his share in producing it, but Master Shakspeare would on no account have believed in such a deplorable state of things, and the woman that enjoyed his affection was too secure of his respect to have so much as a doubt entertained of her detestation of all falsehood and mystery.

It was whilst engaged in deeply thinking on this subject, that there suddenly came a gentle tapping at the door. In the mood in which the tenant of this goodly chamber then was, it can be by no means strange that he heeded it not, though it was repeated more than once. At last the door opened cautiously, and there peeped in no other than our old acquaintance, Simon Stockfish, who, through the good offices of his old master's son, had been engaged as serving-man to Master Shakspeare. There was on his stolid visage an air of mystery, mingled with that look of caution and prudence he was wont to assume whenever he was under any difficulty.

Noticing his master's position, he walked straightway up to him on tip-toe, and whispered his name very gently.

" Well, Simon," said he, instantly rousing himself. " Anything from the Globe ? Any one wanting me about the new play ? "

" No, honorable sir," answered he, still in a whisper, and pointing to the door. " There is a lady, an it please you, seeketh to have instant speech with you."

" A lady, Simon ?" answered his master, in some surprise. " Prythee, what sort of a lady ? "

" A gentlewoman, honorable sir," was the exceeding lucid answer, with an aspect of increased mystery and a show of more confidence in his voice. " That is to say, her apparel is of a creditable sort ; nevertheless, it is not to be gainsayed, dress alone doth not make the gentlewoman. She is tall, and of a stately carriage, and speaks like one used to command ; yet, as is like enough, she may be a monstrous indifferent sort of woman enough as any within a mile."

" What sort of face had she, Simon ? "

" I have especial reasons for not knowing, honorable sir ; seeing that she allowed none

of it to be noticed by me. Her mouth and chin were closed wrapped in a muffler, and the rest of her visage was hid behind a mask. Now, for mine own part, I do think that one who taketh such trouble to hide her face must needs be ashamed of it, and in this case she can be no fit company for your honor ; therefore, an it please you, honorable sir, I think it would be prudent not to allow such a person to have speech of you, and if it be your good pleasure I will on the instant send her packing."

" Said she not who she was, or what business she had with me ? "

" Her name she refused, doubtless for some excellent good reasons ; but, as to the matter she came upon, she said you would have full knowledge of it on your having sight of this ring."

As soon as Simon Stockfish displayed the trinket that had been entrusted to his custody, his master looked like one seeing a ghost.

" Gracious Heaven, can this be possible !" he exclaimed, starting up in a marvellous excited manner, as he took the ring into his hand. " Run, Simon, run !" he added, hurriedly, and to the intense astonishment of his new serving-man. " Bring her to this chamber with all possible speed, and on your life see that I am disturbed by no one—even were it the king himself ! "

" What marvel hath we here ?" cried he, pressing his hands against his brows in a distracted manner, as Simon left the chamber, somewhat bewildered in his thoughts of the person to whom he was sent. " How wondrous ! how incomparably strange ! Surely there must be some huge mistake in this. But, no, this is the ring, out of all manner of doubt : it must be her—it can be no other."

He had scarce well uttered the words, when the door opened, and there entered the chamber just such a female as Simon Stockfish had described. She was enveloped, and hid, as it were, in a large, coarse cloak. This and her face being completely covered up, took from the spectator all ordinary means of guessing her character and condition. The first care of Master Shakspeare was to fasten the door, as hurriedly and as speedily as possible, which he did with an air of wildness, altogether unusual to him, that bespoke some strange and powerful excitement. Whilst this was a doing, the lady tottered to a seat, like one scarce able to support her limbs, into which she dropped as though without sense or motion. It looked as though she had swooned, but this

was not so, for presently she drew a hand from beneath her cloak, and spread it open, and tore from her face the mask and muffler, and gasped as though for air.

The face that was discovered was of extraordinary loveliness; the features were of mature womanhood, yet their settled unhappiness made her seem much older than she was. A proud and lofty brow, eyes that seemed to gleam with a supernatural light, an arched nose, with a mouth, whereof every line spoke unutterable disdain of all mean things, did sufficiently tell of high lineage, without the costly-embroidered robe, fitting tight to the neck and bust, that was seen through the open cloak, which one of poorer quality could never have worn.

Master Shakspeare was hastening towards her, when a sudden and imperative motion of her hand compelled him to stop within a couple of yards of her chair, and for some minutes he there stood, to all appearance, humble as the veriest slave, with looks cast to the earth, a pallid cheek, and a most sorrowful visage—she gazing on him as though her eyes were starting from her head, now pressing her hand to her heart, as if to stop its tumultuous throbings, and anon raising it to her brow, as if to repress some terrible spasm there. Neither spoke a word, and nothing was to be heard but a sort of gasping, with which the lady took her breath. Once or twice it looked as though she essayed to speak, but the sounds died unuttered on her tongue. Yet language wanted she none. The look she cast upon her companion spoke volumes of meaning, such as the most picked phrases could never express.

Master Shakspeare was the first who spoke. But his words were breathed slowly, falteringly, and in a whisper, as though the confused state of his feelings would scarce allow him utterance.

"My Lady Countess, I——"

"Hush!" hastily exclaimed the lady, with a sort of wild desperation, as it were. "I have taken such pains as I have to seek you, unknown to any, to obtain at your hands a service, to the granting of which I have looked forward with feverish anxiousness, through many sleepless nights, and miserable days."

"Be assured, good my lady, it is already granted," said her companion. "Your slightest wish must ever be a law with me, whilst I have aught remaining of sense or life."

"Swear it!" exclaimed she, suddenly starting from her seat, and grasping Master Shakspeare by the arm; then, dropping on

her knees by his side, enforced him to the same posture. "Swear it!" she cried, with a look and manner of intense excitement—"Swear you will do my bidding, as God is your witness and your refuge!"

"I swear it!" answered Master Shakspeare, solemnly. At this his companion dropped her hold on him, buried her face in her hands, and sobbed convulsively for several seconds. In leaving the chair she had freed herself from the cloak which had concealed her dress, which was now displayed in all its richness—and a most costly robe it was, as ever the cunning of woman's tailor triumphed in. It was of wrought cloth of gold, daintily set with pearls; the stately wearer whereof, though boasting of such bravery, in the humble posture which she had chosen, and in the deep distresses of heart she exhibited, looked a marvellous contradiction. The humility of her spirit would have better sorted with cloth of frieze, or other modest apparelling, but her noble figure and majestic beauty undoubtedly did well become the cloth of gold.

Master Shakspeare sought not to disturb her grief, or to check it by any attempt at consolation. He retained his position in silence, but with a heart deeply wrung by the sorrowful spectacle beside him. Her sobs growing to be less vehement, she made a movement as though she would rise, the which he readily assisted; and, without a word on either side, he respectfully led her to her seat, then fell back to the place he had occupied before she had left it, and kept gazing on her with looks which did plainly bespeak his entire sympathy. She continued to sob for some time, leaning low against her chair, her breast heaving convulsively, and in other signs betraying the exceeding powerful agitation by which she was moved.

After a few minutes she raised herself, and gazed steadily at her companion. Her eyes were luminous, and her face deadly pale. She paused awhile, and it was evident she labored under some extraordinary feeling that checked her speech. At last, in a murmur that could scarce be heard, she said—"I have a son." Master Shakspeare listened with intense interest. She continued, but still with extreme difficulty of speech, and in a marvellous low voice—"This boy love I with all my heart and soul. A mother's love, huge as it is at most times, giveth no sufficient conception of the particular affection I bear to him, for reasons which cannot readily be expressed. Up to this time his schooling hath been well cared for. He will not be found deficient in

such scholarship as is considered necessary for one of his condition. But he is now grown to be a youth, requiring for his guidance, in after-years, a knowledge of men rather than of books."

The speaker paused, perchance to collect her ideas. Her countenance was still more like unto a marble effigy, than a human being; and her eloquent gaze was fixed upon the flushed cheek and kindling eye of her companion, who listened to her speech, as though he put his whole soul into his looks.

"It hath become a common, and methinks, a commendable custom," added she, "for youth, of any fortune or degree, to travel to distant countries, under the eye of some wise and worthy person, to see and profit by whatever is most noticeable in other countries ere they commence their career of action in their own. I have so much liking of this custom, I would fain have mine own sweet son to get whatsoever advantages it may bring to him; but there is but one person in this wide world under whose guardianship I would he should obtain it."

Here came another pause, somewhat longer than the other, in which it was exceeding difficult to say which seemed to be most moved. The lady was still the first to display her powers of speech. Her words were uttered slowly, thickly, and scarcely above her breath; and, moreover, there was in them a solemnness which carried them at once to the heart of her singularly attentive companion. She then added— "You have sworn to do me this excellent service."

Master Shakspeare felt his every sense in such a whirl of bewildering sensations, he could not find one single word of speech to state his readiness to fulfil the oath he had taken. He felt not only as if utterance was denied him, but as if he could scarce breathe.

"Dost shrink from it?" asked she, in the same trembling tones.

"I have sworn," said Master Shakspeare, at last, in a manner which showed he had no small difficulty in having such words at his command, "I have sworn, and will regard mine oath most reverently." He longed to ask certain questions—in especial he was desirous of learning when he might be required for this service, but his tongue did so cleave to his throat, not a word more could he utter.

"'Tis well," replied she, taking a long breath, "'tis exceeding well: and I thank you right heartily for your readiness in so

disposing of yourself. But there is one thing more—a thing of most vital moment, a matter of such huge consequence—" Here the speaker ended abruptly, and pressed her hand against her breast, as though its pulses were of such force she could no longer endure them. Then with a mighty effort of self-command, she proceeded—" Whatever your feelings or your thoughts may be regarding him, none must know them; and more than all, at whatever cost, they must be strictly concealed from *him*." Here, seeing her companion striving earnestly to interrupt her, she added, with a more tender expression in her face than she had hitherto used—"I have such opinion of your nobleness of soul that I would not have uttered this caution; but it is not any thing evil, I fear, in you; it is rather an excess of goodness. The better qualities of your heart may, unless they are discreetly governed, do a world of mischief. I pray you think of this."

"Be assured it shall be well thought of," replied he, faintly.

"Guard him as the apple of your eye," she continued. "Instruct him both by precept and example, till his nature hath taken upon itself as much as possible of kindred with your own. Keep him secure of danger of every sort, and make him worthy of bearing an honorable name, and filling a creditable station, if his country should have need of his services. I can speak to you no further on this subject now, but I will not fail to apprise you of the time when you will be called upon to fulfil the service you have undertaken."

At the ending of this speech, Master Shakspeare knelt respectfully at her feet. At first, she seemed inclined to withhold her hand, but, as if struck by the air of respect that was in his aspect and demeanor, she gave it him, and he at once pressed it, though with much more of reverence than gallantry, to his lips. He had scarce done so, when she started up with every sign of fear in her lovely countenance. Sounds were heard on the stairs leading to the chamber in which they were; they appeared to arise from a struggle and an altercation, as though some persons were striving to force their way up stairs. "God of heaven, I have been watched!" exclaimed the lady, in tones of agony and affright.

"I tell thee, thou senseless dolt, thou!" cried a husky voice from outside, "thou shotten herring! thou guinea-hen! thou empty peascod! I must and will have speech with him."

" Nay, Will, pr'ythee let us depart," said another. " It is unmannerly to press upon him thus, if he have company."

" It is Kempe and Allen, two of my familiars," said Master Shakspeare. " But they must, on no account, have sight of you. On with your disguise, I beseech you, and whilst my knave holds them in parley, I will see you safe to the street by a way that shall avoid them."

" As I live, they are forcing their way!" replied the lady, in intense anxiety and alarm, as she hastened to put on her mask and her apparel. " They are coming—they are close upon the door! Oh, let me away this instant!"

Master Shakspeare lost no time in opening a door that entered upon a book-closet, at the end of which was a back stair, down which both proceeded hastily, till they came upon a long passage. Here they could hear a noise of knocking at the door above, mingled with a violent altercation of voices. Master Shakspeare hurried his companion to a door that led into one of the thoroughfares in the liberty of the Clink, knowing full well that Will Kempe, in the state his husky voice too well denoted, was not like to mince his phrases. A brief farewell was all that was passed; the door was quietly closed, and Master Shakspeare rapidly ascended the stairs, and, unmindful of the din outside his chamber, flung himself into the chair near the table, hiding his face upon his arms. A short time sufficed for the indulgence of his feelings. He seemed to make a powerful effort at composure, and rose from his seat to put an end to the wild uproar at the door.

" An ancient kinswoman, sayest?" exclaimed one. " Why thou Barbary ape, thou unspeakable foolish knave! dost think Will Kempe is to be caught by so poor a conceit? Is my gossip and namesake one to have an ancient kinswoman with him at this hour? He is better employed, I'll warrant him."

It is here necessary the reader should know that Simon Stockfish had considered it to be both prudent and politic to conceal from his master's visitors the exact sort of person closeted with him, and took upon himself to say that he was engaged with an ancient kinswoman, and could on no account be disturbed. The which, as was usual in all his politic strokes, made matters a great deal the worse.

It so chanced that the discussion was put to a speedy ending by the opening of the door by his master, who, after duly acknowledging the presence of his ill-timed visitors,

affirmed very confidently his ancient kinswoman had left him some time, and he had since fallen asleep. Nevertheless, it was easy to see, by certain signs, more significant than mannerly, that Kempe was vastly incredulous. What he had to express on the matter he was prevented from giving utterance to by his companion, who commenced by informing Master Shakspeare of certain matters of intelligence respecting the patronage of different companies of players, by the king, the queen, and Prince Henry, and ended by requesting his company at supper at his poor dwelling. This Master Shakspeare was in no mood for, but he was anxious to get both Allen and Kempe out of the house as speedily as possible, so he at once very heartily signified his assent, spoke of an errand he had that required his immediate attention, and in a few seconds was proceeding with them, in an exact contrary direction to that just taken by his fair visiter.

CHAPTER XV.

Next unto his view
She represents a banquet, ushered in
By such a shape as she was sure would win
His appetite to taste.

JOHN CHALKHILL.

AND how, all this while, fared our student of medicine? He had surely been a sufficient time an associate of the family of the famous Master Doctor Posset, to feel himself at home, and, although, perchance, he might miss the anxious care and affection of his admirable kind mother, there was great likelihood that he was looked after by one who omitted no opportunity of showing that she regarded him with a care equally tender, and a much more endearing affection. In short, the attentions of the attractive Millie were of so flattering a sort he must be the dullest stock ever heard of that could resist them.

John Hall, it is true, entered the house a mere student, on whom the passion—commonly called love—had hitherto made no sort of impression; but the conduct pursued towards him by the fair damsel with whom he had become domesticated was of a nature that so powerfully appealed to his feelings, he soon began to throw off the humor of the book-worm, and by degrees take on himself that of the passionate lover. These appeals were not only made by means of a thousand nameless offices of kindness, of services that

had in them the appearance of devotion, which could not but have immense power over a nature so new to the influence of woman, but the critical state of her health, caused by a constant recurrence of convulsive fits of the most alarming character, and the too evident existence of some secret cause of unhappiness, increased greatly the interest with which the young student felt disposed to regard her.

She said nothing positive as to the nature of her unhappiness; all that he could gain on the subject was through the expression of mysterious hints, by which he was made to understand that she led an exceedingly unhappy life with her family.

Whilst the germ of affection was developing itself in the breast of the young student, he heard nothing and beheld nothing that could lead him to imagine that there was any engagement betwixt his friend Leonard and his fair mistress; but, when it had a sure hold of him, Millicent took occasion to acquaint him of its existence. But she did so in a way that looked so like lamenting such should be the case, and did so prettily and so fondly withal promise him at least half the heart, thus unhappily pre-engaged, that he was so bewildered with her flatteries, he could not bring on himself to give up his suit. The more he saw of the behavior of the two to each other, and of the conduct of each towards persons that seemed to be infinitely better thought of, the more he felt satisfied that the engagement was mutually dissatisfactory; and as afterwards she frequently displayed the state of her feelings to him, in a manner that could not be mistaken, he allowed himself to act and feel as if no such engagement existed.

John Hall was of a nature as unsuspicuous as any child, and equally credulous. His experience of wemankind had been limited almost exclusively to his mother, who was one of its rarest examples—gentle, fond, generous, pure-hearted, and single-minded; and he was willing enough to believe that in the devoted Millicent he beheld all that was most admirable and worthy of honor. The education he had had, and the habits of thinking in which he had been wont to indulge, made much in her speech and conduct to him seem strange and unaccountable, but her manner was so pleasing, and her arguments so specious, that it was impossible he could imagine there was any thing improper in her proceedings. Indeed, he most firmly believed her to be the most disinterested, noble-hearted being upon earth; and, though he marvelled at the earnestness with which she pressed him to be on his guard, that

Leonard her betrothed should remain in ignorance of the good understanding which existed betwixt them, he had not a doubt in the world she had some excellent good motive for it.

We must beg leave to transport the courteous reader into no other place than Mistress Millicent's bed-chamber, at a time too, when, with her young companion, she was preparing to retire to rest. The chamber, though small, was peculiarly orderly and clean. It was situated in the roof of the house, at a considerable distance from any of the others. But, though thus isolated, it had every appearance of security, and many of comfort. The bed lay low almost to the floor, yet it seemed to promise more than ordinary accommodation, and from the number of packages, and huge chests and cupboards about it on every side, it showed that there was good store of other furniture equally useful.

Mildred, chatting as fast as her tongue would let her, with a constant recourse to her childish and unmeaning laugh, was getting ready to take the rest it was evident she needed. Millicent seemed to be listening, as she sat at the foot of the bed, combing out her luxuriant tresses, but there was that settled gravity in her aspect that showed she was thinking of a far different matter. But the other cared little whether her especial friend was listening or not. On she proceeded with her narrative, exceeding content to have no interruption.

Now and then her companion uttered a brief unmeaning phrase, evidently more because she was expected to say something, than from any interest she took in the subject or subjects so fluently spoken of. Thus she slowly pursued her task—indeed so slowly, that the other had placed herself under the bedclothes before she had taken off her outer garment. Then she seemed to be wondrous busy looking over a heap of linen, that stood in a heavy arm-chair, as if fresh from the buck-basket. For some short time after Mildred had laid down, she continued her gossip. At last, as though tired of its constant exercise, her tongue ceased, and her full and regular breathing declared she was sinking to sleep. As soon as she heard these sounds, Millicent left off what she was about and gazed for some moments at the sleeper. Presently she took the lamp, and walked gently to the bedside. The examination she gave seemed to satisfy her, for then she quickly but softly glided out of the chamber.

She passed down the staircase without producing the slightest sound, and entered

a chamber, directly over the basement floor. Here she hid the lamp in the fireplace, and went direct to the window. This projected considerably over the lower part of the dwelling, as was the case in most houses at that time, so that any one could gain from it a clear view up and down the street. She opened the casement, and looked to the right for a considerable space. She then gazed in the opposite direction, but as it seemed with a like result. If she expected any one at that hour, it did not look as though her expectation would get fulfilled. There was no one visible from one end of Golden Lane to the other, as far as could be seen of it. Indeed, all Barbican appeared undisturbed, even by so much as a solitary constable of the watch.

It was a clear starlight night, that made the picturesque features of the quaint old houses in that quarter of the city as godly a picture of the sort as the eye might look on. Millicent sat herself down by the open casement, with her elbow resting on its ledge, and her cheek supported by her hand. She sometimes looked up to the deep blue sky, which, with its myriad lights, spread far and wide over the tall chumminies and sloping eaves; but her look wondrously lacked that devotion, which the young heart cannot fail to feel when impressed with the beauty of that marvellous work of the Great Architect. She gazed upon the buildings before her with the same absolute indifference. Neither the work of God nor man appeared to excite in her the slightest speculation; yet was her mind infinitely busy. All its energies were bent to the consideration of the best means of accomplishing certain purposes of her own, the policy of which would have done credit to the veriest grey-beard that ever sat at a council board, or directed the powers of mighty states.

A slight sound disturbed her reveries, and she immediately looked forth, but drew in her head again, or seeing it was a neighbor hastening for a midwife. Again they were interrupted, but this time it was by the noisy singing of a group of merry apprentices, who had stolen out from their master's dwellings, doubtless for some especial mischief, which caused her to draw back so far into the chamber she could not be seen by them. She returned to her position, and remained there some time longer. The silence was undisturbed, the blue canopy above seemed to have gained additional brilliancy, and the sharp outlines of the houses around looked to be placed in a more pleasing perspective, but to Millicent all these were still as though they had never been.

Now a light quick footfall attracted her attention. She started up on the instant, as though she recognized the sound. By the indistinct light she observed a man hurriedly approaching towards the house. What was his age or dignity was not sufficiently evident; but from the firm step he took, and the uprightness of his stature, it might reasonably be supposed he was not far advanced in life. He was close upon the house and just under the casement, when Penelope cried out, "Hist!" which caused him to stop instantly and look up. She put her finger to her lips, as she leaned forward. Satisfied that the sign was attended to, she presently closed the casement, took the lamp from its hiding-place, and noiselessly crept down stairs.

In a moment after, the street door was opened very gently, and the person seen outside admitted. The door was then gently closed and fastened. Scarce had it been done, when without a word spoken on either side, he received such usage as showed her visitor was on the footing of a lover. The two were then perfectly in the dark. Then he followed her footsteps up-stairs, at a turning in which stood the light which she had left there when she admitted him. This she took up, and proceeded, followed by the other noiselessly, till she entered a chamber which adjoined that in which lay the unconscious Mildred.

There was an appearance in it of studied comfort. A fire burnt on the hearth, and materials for an excellent repast strewed on the table. Millicent put down the light, and once more embraced her gallant—for her gallant out of all question he was. Nothing could exceed the delight she displayed. Her pale features were lighted up with admiration. Her words were most honeyed flattery, and her actions the most caressing fond woman ever disclosed. She divested her companion of his hat, then of his boots, putting on his feet a pair of comfortable slippers, and made him sit down to his supper and waited on him pressingly and diligently, partaking of none herself, but sparing no pains to make him eat and drink heartily.

And who was the gallant so well cared for? It was no other than John Hall, and the place in which he and the seductive Millicent were was his own chamber, which, by the way, was in some way evident, from the books and other signs of study there to be found. He could not but make earnest acknowledgments for the loving care she took of him. In truth, her entire devotedness to him, which she made every possible

effort to show him clandestinely, had not been without its due effect on his grateful disposition.

Indeed, the manner of her behavior filled him at last with a sort of intoxicating delirium. He was never happy save when he was alone with her, and although there was nothing on his part strictly evil to conceal, he was ever in a constant mood of apprehension that his feelings should betray her.

He began to feel exceeding anxious and uneasy when alone with the always friendly Leonard, although it would have been a difficult matter to have shown any just cause for it. In short, his senses were mystified and confounded, and he scarce could arrive at one definite conclusion, save that he loved Millicent, and, although this was a monstrous injustice to his friend, he would be doing a still greater wrong to the fond creature who strove so earnestly to pleasure him, were he to love her one jot the less.

By this time the supper things had been cleared away save only the flask of wine and a tall glass, and Millicent had seated herself on a chair on the opposite side of the chimney.

At the constant request of his fair mistress, the young student, from time to time, finished his glass; and the wine began to have its effects upon him. His eyes flashed with an unwonted brilliance; his pale cheek had on it a glow that in warmth rivalled that of health, and his tongue contrived to exercise its qualities after a fashion quite foreign to his ordinary habits. His spirits seemed every moment to rise higher and higher. He uttered jests, and delivered compliments, the one with humor, the other with both spirit and grace; and she seemed to have equal satisfaction in both, returning too, the coin he gave with prodigal interest. Then she, when this humor of his was at its height, begged of him, in too pretty a way to be denied, that he would sing to her the same exquisite sweet ballad she had heard him sing to Leonard the day previous.

At another time it is like enough our young student would have done all in his power to get off attempting a love-ditty to the too charming Millicent, but he had drunk so much wine, and imbibed so much flattery—the more intoxicating of the two—that he was ready to do her bidding on the instant. He merely uttered a few brief apologies for his want of skill, and then commenced:

THE HEART'S RECAL.

Come back, fond heart! why wouldst thou stay?
Content thee with thy present dwelling;
Enjoy thine ease, whilst here thou may—

What ills thou seek'st, there is no telling.
Fond heart replied, "Too long I've pined,
Unloved, unloving, dull, and dreary;
In yon fair breast a home I'll find,
For of my own I am full weary."

Ah, me, 'twas but a little space—
The least of Time's fast bursting bubbles—
The truant found his dwelling-place
Beset by countless pains and troubles.
"Oh, would I could but know again,"
Quoth he, "that peace I have so needed,
None then should say, 'Come back,' in vain,
None then should warn, and be unheeded!"

When he came to the end of his ditty, he fully expected to hear the usual gracious commentary, but, to his extreme surprise, there ensued a dead silence; and turning round to see why it was, to his astonishment and alarm he perceived that his companion was in one of those strange convulsive fits that were wont to visit her so roughly.

She sat leaning back in her chair, her face bloodless, her eyes fixed, and her lower jaw constantly snapping against the other. Her arms were in her lap, but they were slightly raised once or twice, and dropped down again. John Hall was hugely concerned at this. He hurried to her, and, supporting her in his arms, strove to open her hands, which were close shut and compressed.

Whilst he was intent in this, she heaved a deep breath. Anon, she began to laugh, first slightly, and then in long peals of frightful vehemence. Then she took to talking, and, to her companion's no small gratification, did say many things that spoke the extent of her passion for him.

Crying followed laughing, and all sorts of strange phrases were mixed up with her passionate declarations. Sometimes there was a pause, and she seemed, but for the beating of her heart, like one from whom life hath departed, and then the wild hysterical laughter would burst out afresh, and she would act over again with increased frenzy the loving confession she had just made.

To John Hall's exceeding credit, he bore himself towards her throughout with an infinite greater show of the physician than the lover; and when she at last began to exhibit signs of returning consciousness, he gently placed her back in the chair, and merely stood by her, holding one of her hands, so that, on her recovery, her sense of womanly delicacy might not be shocked by any thing which might lead her into the belief that she had made the disclosure of her feelings she had.

She presently drew her hands over her

face, and stared about her like one waking from a strange dream. Then she cast her eyes upon her companion with a singular curiousness, and slowly began to have some conception of surrounding objects. She heaved a deep sigh, and looked unutterably wretched. The young student, with an evident sympathy, expressed his hopes she felt better. She smiled faintly, and, in few words, acknowledged she was so. Then she rose from her chair as though with some difficulty, and for a while leaned her head on his shoulder. John Hall was too much accustomed to receive such familiarities from her to be surprised at such an act. Yet he felt a thrill of pleasure dart through his frame as her cheek came close to his, and he could not refrain, by means of the arm that encircled her waist, from drawing her into closer neighborhood—a great boldness in him. This was immediately responded to on her part by her raising her lustrous eyes to his, and fixing on him a gaze, that he could not have looked on for an instant. His eyes fell before it, and he felt dizzy and faint, like one about to sink into a swoon.

A silence followed, uninterrupted on either side. Finally, Millicent, making some ordinary remark on the lateness of the hour, lit a small lamp that was in the room, and, with one of her most bewitching “good nights,” faintly answered by him, took her own light, and quietly glided out of the room. She had scarcely closed the door when her whole countenance underwent a sudden and most complete change. Her brow was fiercely knit, and her visage expressed utter dissatisfaction. Little did the unsuspecting student imagine that the whole scene, like many others that had preceded it, had been acted by her; and that each and all those fits, which had so distressed him to look on, were simulated for the purpose of exciting his sympathy.

CHAPTER XVI.

They that enter into the state of marriage cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity—life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

AFTER due consideration of the duty he had so strongly bound himself to fulfil, Master Shakspeare made arrangements for paying a visit to his family at Shottery. He, as was usual with him on all such occasions, took leave of his friends and fellows

at the playhouse, by means of a jovial supper at his lodgings in the liberty of the Clink; and early next morning started off, accompanied by Simon Stockfish, both well armed, and otherwise well provided for a long journey, on the road to Oxford.

Simon was very differently circumstanced in this journey, to what he was then travelling with his old master's son; in the first place, there was a very opposite style of horseflesh employed on the present occasion; in the next, he had no such important responsibility as weighed so heavily on him when acting as guardian to the young student. Master Shakspeare rode a fine tall horse, worthy to carry an emperor, and Simon had for his own riding a truly serviceable gelding, that was possessed of very good paces; and, so far from wanting a guide, Master Shakspeare knew the road so well, he could have gone the whole distance blindfold.

Simon, however, had, as in his memorable journey to London, ample opportunity for cultivating his genius for taciturnity.—Though he had usually found his master agreeably communicative, and ever with something pleasant in his speech, all the way nearly to Oxford, he was so deeply intent on his own thoughts, as to seem to take no heed of any other matter whatsoever. Doubtless he was considering the important matters that had transpired during the extraordinary visit he had received. He seemed to be going over in his mind the whole remarkable history of his Secret Passion.

As he approached the University, he strove to shake off the load of thought which pressed upon him, and suddenly disturbed his sedate old follower, in the midst of certain deep considerations as to the properest policy for him to pursue for the advancing or securing of his master's interests under divers possible contingencies, by affording him various pleasant remembrances of the fair city he was about to enter. As if for to make up for his want of sociality previously, he now began to entertain his humble fellow-traveller with numberless stories of the freaks and humors of the college youths. They seemed to amuse Simon wonderfully; and when they rode up to “The Crown,” it was difficult to say which was in the choicest spirits, the master or the man.

Simon, however, speedily recovered his custinary staidness, and in looking after the stable-boys, and giving directions for the proper dieting and attentions to his master's beasts, demeaned himself as became

his reputation for gravity or caution. He did more—fully impressed with the superior advantages of gaining the ear of the higher powers, and feeling bound in conscience to do his utmost for the benefitting of his good master, he took the first opportunity he could of speaking in private with the hostess of “The Crown,” in honor of the exceeding worthy person whose serving-man he had the good fortune to be, and with much earnestness begged she would see that he had every thing of the best at a fair and reasonable charge.

Simon Stockfish little knew the amusement the relation of this studied speech of his, by Mistress D'Avement to Master Shakspeare, caused in the little parlor the latter was wont to use when staying at Oxford. But we cannot now tarry to narrate what was said on that occasion, nor any other thing that passed, when it came to be bruited among the Oxford scholars that Will Shakspeare was at “The Crown.” We must needs hurry him out of that fair and ancient city, which he left early the next morning, to carry him as fast as we can towards Stratford.

As he travelled along, his thoughts set in a totally different direction to that they had taken in the earlier part of his journey. The heart of Master Shakspeare was one admirably attuned to all the sweet affections of domestic life. God only knoweth with what overmastering love he had regarded his sweet young son. He could not but shudder when he considered the terrible punishment he had endured in his lamentable death, in which all his ambitious hopes for him had been levelled to the dust, and his whole nature crushed, as it were, in the ruins. But, though his beloved Hamnet was no longer to gladden his eyes with his beauty and intelligence, there was still left him the wild and wilful Judith, who, with all her strange unfeminine ways, was an object of love to him; and, better still, there was the tender and loving Susanna, of whose entire affections he felt himself secure.

He had, as was his custom, brought with him presents for every member of his family, selected to meet their several wants or tastes. Even the three aunts, whose hostility to him and talent for mischief he had been made to appreciate so often, had not been forgotten; and he busied himself very pleasantly in anticipating the gratification these gifts would create:—how greatly Mistress Anne would be enmored of the piece of Norwich stuff that was to make her a new gown!—What exceeding joy Judith

would display at the sight of the gay ribbons he would set before her! and how tenderly Susanna would express her thanks for the dainty ear-rings of Venetian gold he had bought to adorn her delicate ears! The new knitting instruments, the excellent hose, and the admirable Cambridge gloves, which he had procured for the three elderly Breedbates, he doubted not would suffice for the creating of their good-will and good-humor—till the next opportunity of backbiting presented itself.

Simon Stockfish all this while did not allow the time to grow irksome; so thoughtful a person, about to make such important connexions as the family of his respected master, could not fail of giving the circumstance all the benefit to be derived from sufficient reflection. He laid down rules for his guidance, prepared answers ready for certain questions he expected to be put to him, made up his mind to be a miracle of discretion touching his master's secrets, the more especial as regarded the questionable visiter he had strove to pass off on Kempe and Allen as an ancient kinswoman, and cudgelled his brains for politic strokes wherewith to screen his honored master, should any thing of this suspicious matter have got bruited abroad. Therefore it was no wonder Simon wore a graver countenance even than usual. Truly had all the cares of empire devolved upon him, he could not have looked more thoughtful than he did.

As Master Shakspeare approached scenes so familiar to him, and so endeared to his recollection as those that were in the neighborhood of his home, every object that met his sight did, by some means or other, connect itself with his lost Hamnet; and, by some singular association of ideas, this intolerable affliction drew his mind to the consideration of other things, which did marvellously increase the sadness of his humor. He was in no mood for light converse. He endured such sharp pangs, that, as he advanced, he became more dejected, and less inclined for playing of the social part that so well became him.

He was disturbed in these unpleasant reflections, when within a short distance of Stratford, by observing two figures approaching from the town, that, at first, from the strangeness of their motions and appearance, did puzzle him exceedingly to make out to what kind of animal they belonged. On they came, seeming to be flying along the surface of the ground, uttering the most singular cries ever heard. Whether they were beasts, birds, or those marvellous creatures that are said to par-

take of the different natures of both, it was not easy to decide. Master Shakspere was at a nonplus. But Simon Stockfish, who had been preparing himself to meet many strange things, as, in his sagacity, he thought was very natural when going to a strange place, was astonished far beyond any astonishment he had felt all his life long.

On came these nondescripts with a most horrible din, sometimes abreast, anon following each other; having so singular a motion withal, it could not be said, with any certainty, whether they were flying like birds, or leaping like grasshoppers. Simon, though he was in a terrible fright at meeting such outlandish things, considered it was his duty to defend his master from any mischief they were like to do him; for that they came with some murderous intent he had no manner of doubt. He looked to his pistolets, and had his hand upon one, in readiness to meet the expected assault.

The wonder with which Master Shakspere noticed them at first gave way to a smile, as soon as they came near enough for him to view them correctly. He drew up his horse, and, notwithstanding his mind was so ill at ease, he could scarce refrain from mirth. His faithful serving-man, judging, from his master's stopping, that now was the time for action, though his heart was in his mouth, he was in so huge a fear, drew forth a pistolet, and rode to his side, having valorously made up his mind not to be eaten up alive till he had done something in his respected master's defence. "I will shoot the first villain, an it please you," he said, hurriedly, and in a terrible trepidation. "Perchance it would be good policy were you, at the same moment, to despatch the other." Simon got no other answer than having his weapon knocked upwards by his master's hand, at which instant it went off, expending its ammunition harmlessly in the air; and well it was for Simon that action was so quickly done, or such mischief would have followed as would have put him in greater peril than that from which he sought to escape.

If this astonished him, how infinitely more did he marvel when, at the same instant, the horrible nondescripts appeared standing before him, in the outward resemblance of men—men, too, from whom it was evident there was nothing to fear, there was in them so much to laugh at.

They were no other than the reader's old acquaintances, Jonas Tiptope and Tommy Hart. The latter had heard that the much-respected brother of his merry little wife

was expected at Stratford, and he was sent to meet him with a communication of grave import. He was joined by his nimble friend Jonas; and, quite forgetful of the exceeding serious nature of what he was instructed to state, no sooner had he caught sight of Master Shakspere than he challenged his companion to a race, in his favorite method of progression, alternately using the hands and feet. The challenge was as soon accepted as spoken, and off they started.

Both were adepts in this strange feat, for which they were famed, far and near; and it was the manner in which they advanced, now with the head close to the ground and now up, and at a distance showing nothing but a confused bundle of arms and legs, going round like the spokes of a wheel in rapid motion, with the savage cries they thought fit to make, that puzzled Master Shakspere, and put his valiant and faithful serving-man into so absolute a fear.

Simon, albeit he had so carefully made up his mind to see strange things, marvelling so greatly at the wonderful transformation he had just beheld, that it clean took away his speech. He gazed upon Tommy Hart and his odd-looking associate, as though he could not convince himself that they were human. It was his master who first brought all parties to feel a little at their ease. He explained the mistake of his attendant so pleasantly withal, that they who were likely to have suffered by it so dreadfully seemed to take it as the most exquisite jest they had ever heard.

After making friendly inquiries for all of his acquaintance at Stratford, which brought upon him a whole budget of news, and assuring both his townsmeu he would not be long before he paid them a visit, he took his leave of them. Tommy Hart was so taken up with the enjoyment of his mirth, and the prodigious quantity of gossip he related, that the message with which he had been sent escaped him as completely as though he had had no knowledge of it; and Master Shakspere rode away towards Shottery, unwarned of the state in which he was like to find matters there. Simon rode after him, but not before he had seen the two singular beings, whose approach had so much alarmed him, comine again their unnatural method of progress. He said never a word, but he was fully satisfied, extraordinary as it seemed to him, that the men of Warwickshire went upon four legs.

His master dismounted when within a convenient distance of the cottage, and Simon held the horse while he proceeded to the door. It struck him as something mar-

yellous, that no one of the family was visible in or about the house. At all other times they were wont either to meet him in a body, within a mile or so of home ; or, if circumstances would not allow of this, they were about the door, waiting anxiously for his appearance ; and, directly he rode up, the children would rush towards him with loud demonstrations of pleasure. Now not a soul had he seen, and the place was as silent as though it had been deserted. The doors and windows, too, were all carefully closed. Even of Talbot, a still more rare occurrence, there was no sign.

This unusual state of things struck the loving father and husband as exceeding strange. He knocked at the door. No answer was returned ; but on listening, he fancied he could hear some persons whispering inside. He knocked still louder, and could evidently distinguish the voice of his tender and affectionate Susanna, endeavoring to quiet Talbot, who had been disturbed by the knocking. Marvelling greatly that no one came, though there could be no doubt several persons were within, and knowing he had sent word by a trusty hand of his coming at this very time, he took his heavy riding-whip and beat the door with sufficient violence to arouse all the people in the house, were they ever so deaf, and also raised his voice to its highest pitch, bidding them let him in. No sooner did the faithful Talbot hear his master's voice, than all attempts to keep him silent were vain ; he barked and whined most vociferously. It then appeared that he was shut up, but his efforts to get out were of the most violent sort. Still Master Shakespeare could hear three or four individuals at least, carrying on an animated debate in a low tone of voice. He could hear nothing distinctly, but the voices appeared to be those of women.

At last, on his loudly asking the reason of this strange reception of him, the window over his head was slowly thrown open, and there appeared at it the strongly marked visage of Aunt Prateapace. She put on at first a monstrous friendly manner, and bade her kinsman "good den," as pleasantly as you please, but, upon his peremptorily insisting upon knowing why he was kept out of his house in this unheard-of fashion, she presently raised her voice to the true shrewish pitch, and, as Master Shakespeare could plainly hear, continually prompted by some persons behind her to whom she ever and anon turned her head, she began to rate him right soundly, and let him know "our Anne," with a spirit worthy of her family,

had come to the proper determination of having no more to do with him ; therefore, he might take himself away with all possible haste.

Master Shakespeare listened to this tirade, fully satisfied that the three old harridans had been employing their talents at mischief-making with more than ordinary zeal ; but proud, weak, and wilful as he knew his blooming Anne of former years to be, he could not readily believe that the influence of her meddling kinswomen over her was so great as to induce her to take the step which, he was well convinced, they had long been leading her to. That he was greatly moved at a determination so unexpected there is no question ; but he kept his feelings under control, and courteously bade Aunt Prateapace acquaint "his dear bedfellow" from him, that he was exceeding anxious to see her, and that he had no doubt in the world that in a few minutes he would explain all apparent evils to her perfect satisfaction, and would make such arrangements for her future comfort as should convince her how dear to him was her happiness and contentation.

"In sooth, fairly spoken," replied Aunt Prateapace, sharply. "But our Anne hath had enough of such poor bates to catch fools, I promise you." Here she disappeared, and immediately in her place came Aunt Breedbate, looking even more crabbed than the other.

"Take your fine speeches to those who are willing to be cajoled by them," she said in her harshest tones. "Our Anne hath too much sense, ay, and spirit too as becomes her, i' faith, any longer to be made a convenience of." Thereupon, she took in her head, and it was straightway replaced by that of Aunt Gadabout, with one of the most fiercely shrewish of her shrewish looks.

"Wives are not to be made slaves of, whatever their tyrants of husbands may think !" she exclaimed in a scream like unto that of an angry peacock. "Our Anne thinks herself made of better stuff than to be a poor household drudge, that is to be kept at home whilst her unworthy husband is to wander about the world at his pleasure ;" and then she added in an emphasis, and with a look that spoke pokers and tongs at the least, "An I had a husband that would use me so, I warrant you I would teach him better ere he was a week older !"

"There must be some great misunderstanding in this matter," replied Master Shakespeare with a marvellous sweet patience. "In all reasonable things Anne

hath ever found me willing to indulge her to the fullest extent of my ability, and this I am always ready to do."

"There hath been nothing of the sort!" cried Aunt Breedbate, rudely.

"Monstrous reasonable, forsooth!" exclaimed Aunt Prateapace, taking her place at the casement directly she left it. "Pray thee, what dost call indulgence? Dost indulge her by the horrible injustice of keeping her in this poor place by herself, whilst you sometimes for a whole year together care not to come near her once! And now, more monstrous still, you have sent her word you are about going, Heaven only knoweth how many miles away, for the seeing of far off countries, saying never a word of her going with you, farther than to state you would like it of all things; but it could not in any way be brought about—or some such poor stuff. If she put up with such a slight as this, she hath no more wondrous spirit than a cracked flea!"

"Let her be assured that no slight is intended," said Master Shakspeare, very certain it could not have been taken so by her unless a vast deal of malicious care had been used to give it that color. "My absence from her was first caused by necessity, and by necessity hath been continued, and all the years it hath lasted, she hath never to my knowledge been otherwise than satisfied it should so remain. As for my intended journey out of England, it is clean out of my power to take her with me, even were there no such absolute cause existing as there is, for her remaining at home with her children, nor do I think so ill of her that she would ever entertain so unworthy an idea, had it not been thrust upon her mind by the perverse exertions of a set of worthless mischief-makers."

"Mischief-makers!" here eagerly exclaimed all three, putting out their several heads at the same moment, with every appearance of guilty consciousness, and the most absolute rage. Forthwith each vigorously disclaimed having any thing to do in the matter, vowing nothing was so far from their thoughts. They stoutly and with an infinite lack of civility insisted that they had a right to see that 'our Anne' had justice done her, and that they could not allow of her being so trampled on as she was without feeling for her unhappy, distressed state—that they thought it particularly commendable of her acting as she did, and that they would give her the benefit of their countenance and advice, in spite of all the monstrous tyrannical husbands that could be found.

Much more they might have said to the same purpose, had not Aunt Prateapace, in her impatience to be heard, interrupted Aunt Gadabout somewhat sharply, which was replied to in a terrible savage humor, whereupon a squabble ensued betwixt them, which Aunt Breedbate did all she could to increase. In the midst of their mutual bickerings and revelations, Master Shakspeare, much excited, declared that he insisted on seeing and hearing from their kinswoman the determination they had stated she had resolved on. This took them from the window in a very brief space.

A long and vigorous discussion followed, which could not be distinctly heard by the outraged husband, though he could distinguish the noisy hum of many voices. It seemed to him as though others than the mischievous three shared in the conference, and he more than once fancied he could detect the tones of the high-spirited Judith and the affectionate Susanna.

The result of the discussion was, that Mistress Anne made her appearance at the window, but not before he had plainly heard such phrases as, "Hold thee a good spirit, Anne!" . "Never be made a slave of!" "An you suffer yourself to be cajoled, you deserve all the ill-usage and neglect it can't help but bring you!" with divers others of a like tendency. Her visage did not bespeak any very terrible grievances, though there was a certain expression of discontent in it. She had still some pretensions to be considered the blooming Anne, though pretty well a score of years had passed since first that title had been bestowed upon her. But she valued her good looks too highly not to have taken particular care of them.

Master Shakspeare, at sight of her, urged all arguments that a fond husband could be expected to have, to bring her to reason and show her the folly of persisting in a course of conduct so unworthy of her: but she had been too well instructed in her lesson to allow the proper influence of any thing of the sort. She answered with a firm show of resolution, that she considered herself to have been exceedingly ill used, and that she would endure it no longer. Her husband tried every possible exertion to induce her to give up so unworthy a determination, and promised many additional enjoyments, would she determine more wisely. But the promptings became now eager and audible, "Not to be cozened," and, "to show a proper spirit." Unfortunately for herself, either through fear or inclination, she took too much heed of them, and answered she had

considered the matter well, and had resolved to change not her course.

This seemed so far to satisfy her husband that he left off pressing the point, though he wore a very disturbed countenance. He asked to see his daughters that he might at least have the pleasure of beholding their improved appearance, and enjoy their love after his journey, as it was not likely he could promise himself that pleasure for some time. Thereupon, one of the aunts answered tartly, that, as was exceeding proper and natural, the children shared in the sentiments of their mother, and that neither of them wished to have further speech with him.

At this cruel speech, all the father was in his heart, and he replied, with an extreme earnestness, he could not believe in any thing so monstrous and undutiful. It was almost too unnatural a thing to be conceived that children should be so set against a loving parent, and he inveighed bitterly against the authors of this atrocious mischief. How much more was his affectionate heart wrung by soon afterwards beholding Judith, who too, doubtless, had been well taught her lesson, appear with an unbecoming boldness at the easement, and express herself very rudely.

Whether he so disliked this last drop in his cup of bitterness, or could not bring himself to strive further to obtain more affectionate trentinent, cannot be said,—but the speech had scarce been uttered when he hastily left the place, mounted his horse, and rode full speed from the door, as though he was anxious to be as quick as possible a thousand miles away. Simon Stockfish, who had been an amazed spectator and hearer of all that had passed, lost no time in following; but what he had already seen and heard of the people who were natural to the place, sufficed to satisfy him that they were a sort of savages, who had as monstrous a way of receiving a tender father and husband, after a long journey, as they had of taking an ordinary ramble on the king's highway.

Master Shakspeare did not draw rein till he arrived at the porch of the goodly mansion of his excellent friend, Sir George Carew. That estimable, worthy gentleman, and approved good soldier, chanced, at the time, to be sitting at an open window on the ground-floor, giving orders to some of his people who were employed in clipping some old yew-trees into the strange figures then in fashion. But on the instant he caught sight of his visitor, riding like a post, with a wild, unnatural look, such as he had ne-

ver seen in him before, he made no more to do but leaped out of the window as nimblly as ever he could have done in his youth, in the fullest conviction that something dreadful was the matter.

Giving orders to one of his varlets to look to the horses, he lost no time in leading his disturbed friend into a retired chamber, where, in a strange, incoherent, passionate manner, the latter made known to him how matters stood. At this the valiant old soldier was greatly moved, and with no small stock of soldier-like oaths did he denounce the conduct of the three old mischief-makers, whose dishonest meddling had disturbed his friend's peace, and he strove, as well as he was able, to console him.

But the unhappy father was then in no mood to profit by his kindly intentions. The iron seemed to have entered into his soul, and he did nought in the world but rave, in an unconnected and vehement manner, on the singular and hateful ingratitude of his daughters. He burst out with a passionate phrenzy of language that was quite awful to hear. His words seemed to flow from his mouth like a stream of living fire. All the agonies of a great heart, hurt in its tenderest part, were shown in him both by language and action—for his movements were no less wild and forcible than his speech.—In brief, it presently showed such undeniable signs of a disturbed mind, that Sir George, in great concern, despatched messengers for the nearest chirurgeon, and his guest was shortly carried to a chamber that was immediately prepared for him, in a fit of raving, of so outrageous a sort, it took several persons to restrain him.

In this state he continued for several days, to the terrible alarm and grief of his approved good friend, Sir George Carew, and to the no less concern of his sedate and trusty serving-man, Simon Stockfish, whose grave countenance took on it an expression infinitely more serious, as he witnessed the course of his worthy master's malady. With so sharp a sickness as he had, it was wonderful to hear with what intensity his mind would run on, on the subject of his children's disobedience. He seemed to have but one subject for his thoughts, that could hold it for any length of time; for, although his mind would wander from time to time to other matters, it quickly returned to the one theme, and thereupon treated it in so moving a manner, it was truly pitiful to hear him.

He would seem to be addressing his daughter, Judith; and would pour out such a tempest of bitter reproach for her contu-

macy, that the obluratest heart ever heard of must have shrunk under it. Perchance she might have been all the better, had she been brought in to hear it—it could scarcely have failed to have touched her nearly. Indifferent as she seemed to the ties that bind the child to the parent, it must have wakened in her a proper sense of her intolerable ingratitude. But the style in which he, in his unhappy conceit, discoursed to his daughter, Susanna, was of a totally different sort. The bruised heart of the loving father was apparent in every word. The speech was gentle, loving, and pregnant with a melancholy tenderness. It spoke of the unutterable delight those tokens of an affectionate nature she had previously displayed had given to her doting father; and how oft he had strove to show to her, by every kind of acceptable remembrance, how exceeding dear she was to him; and then it entered into the monstrous cruelty of suffering one who had made for her so high a place in his heart to be so stricken by her hand as to make the horriblest torture of body to be desired in preference.

There was so much sweet earnestness, and a misery so sharp in the manner in which all this was spoken, that there was not a dry eye in the chamber during its utterance. Many of his most esteemed friends at Stratford, and thereabouts, hastened to the mansion of Sir George Carew, as soon as they heard of the lamentable sickness that had overtaken so worthy a man; and when they learned, as they quickly did, that it arose from the ill-behavior to him of his family, there was a general denunciation of one and all.

The three meddling busy-bodies, in especial, were spoken of in good set terms.—They were in considerable ill repute in and about Shottery, as it was; and the account Simon Stockfish gave of their appearance in this unhappy business, whilst it satisfied all who had in any way heard of their pranks, that the whole matter had been one of their handling, spread their bad names far and wide. All those persons who felt a proper respect for Master Shakspeare would have no sort of association with them, and the feeling against them became at last so strong, that even some of their most familiar gossips thought it best to hold them at a convenient distance.

Their kinswoman, too, Mistress Anne, was greatly condemned for being so led against her husband by such bad counsellors. As for Susanna and Judith, it appeared as if nothing could be said of them sufficiently condemnatory. To behave in

so contumacious a manner, particularly to a father, who gave them so many proofs of his profligal love and kindness, was sad evidence of a natural badness of heart: and it was confidently prognosticated that disobedient children of this sort must needs come to an evil end.

To the great joy of all his friends, after some days, the violence of Master Shakspeare's fever shewed some abatement, and he began gradually to recover. Sir George Carew had sent several times to the cottage at Shottery, in hopes of getting the family of his guest to act more becomingly; but his messengers met with no one but the three arch instruments of mischief, and they had set their hearts too strongly on the evil they were doing, to allow of its being set aside—therefore, nothing but unsatisfactory answers had been obtained. This, when his guest was sufficiently recovered, Sir George thought proper to inform him of; and the intelligence was so distasteful, that, waiting only to make some arrangements which should secure ample comforts for the unnatural inhabitants of the Cottage, he must needs take himself at once to London.

He vowed he would never again seek a roof whence he had been so shamefully driven, and was in a monstrous hurry to get as far as possible from it. Without waiting to gain a proper strength, he started off, making as little delay on the journey as he could help; whereof the consequence was, that, when his faithful old serving-man had got him safely within his dwelling, in the Liberty of the Clink, his intense anxiety, over-fatigue, and unhappiness of mind, brought on a relapse, which caused him to be worse even than he was before. Simon thought he could not do better than send for his old master's son, and, very shortly afterwards, John Hall was at the bedside of his patient, and, as he ascertained, not before he had been wanted there.

CHAPTER XVII.

A modest maid decked with a blush of honor,
Whose feet do tread green paths of youth and
love;

The wonder of all eyes that look upon her;
Sacred on earth; designed a saint above;
Chastity and Beauty, which are deadly foes,
Live reconciled friends within her brow.

SAMUEL DANIEL.

WHATEVER success the three villainous ministers of mischief met with in their pro-

ceedings in the cottage at Shottery, they had no manner of assistance in it from the gentle and tender-hearted Susanna. But, it is believed, they held her in so little account, they cared for none at her hands. She was in no way consulted in the matter. Nevertheless, she regarded the whole proceedings with the most intense interest. She listened to all the plans and arguments of the arch-conspirators with a feverish impatience, and when she heard her dear father abused, she could scarce refrain from calling the slanderers to task for their insolency. However, she knew of old what little good was like to arise from any interference on her part; therefore, she was fain to hold her peace, and weep in silence.

Her knowledge of such vile behavior, shown to one whom she so greatly loved and venerated, preyed on her spirits so that she could take no pleasure in any thing. Most unhappily the day passed over, and most wretched was the day that followed. She was exceeding anxious to have some certain intelligence of her father, but she heard nothing from the villainous conclave who ruled the little household of which she was so unimportant a member, that was sufficiently to the purpose, and she knew but too well the unprofitableness of asking.

To such a height at last arose her anxiety, that on the evening of the second day she fell into a violent hysterical fit, that did so weaken her, that she was forced to keep her bed for several days. She thus remained in entire ignorance of the critical state of health of that beloved object to whom all her thoughts had lately been so painfully devoted. It was more than a week before she was so far recovered she could return to her usual duties. For some reason or other, there was little then said, either by her mother, sister, or aunts concerning her father. If they conversed on that subject, they took care to do so when she was not by. This conduct perplexed her exceedingly. Desiring more every hour to learn how her dear father took the monstrous unkindness that had been shown him, and longing most heartily to find some means of acquainting him, that in her heart, at least, there was a proper love and obedience towards him, Susanna sought an opportunity of going to Stratford, in the hope of learning from her merry kinswoman, Joan Hart, with whom she had ever been an especial favorite, all that she knew of the matter, her ignorance of which so distressed her.

She found little difficulty in this, and in a state of mind made up of rejoicing, that she was now pretty sure of hearing intelli-

gence of her father, and a dread that it might be of a terrible bad complexion, she proceeded as rapidly as she could towards Stratford. She had not left the cottage far behind her, when her attention was attracted by the sound of horses' feet, and she soon discerned two horsemen coming from the place to which she was going. One of these she perceived was Sir George Carew, and the other young Squire Clopton.

She had never met the former without his showing towards her a most kind and fatherly attention. He would stop her wherever they chanced to meet, and make all manner of friendly inquiries respecting her and her mother and sister, and would usually inform her of some piece of pleasant news respecting her father, he had heard from some trustworthy intelligencer, and he would season his discourse with certain pretty commendations of his own regarding her appearance, that never failed to call a blush to her cheek, and a touch of grateful pleasure to her breast; and thereupon he would take his leave of her with a show of gallantry, as though she were as greatly in his esteem as his own lady.

The young squire, also, had not been wont to pass her by unheeded. Indeed, if the truth must be told, this was very far from the case. He had seen something of a camp life, and moreover something of a court life, the which the great repute his kinsman and guardian enjoyed in both places threw open to him, but he had brought little from either, save an inordinate love of brave apparel, and a desire of distinguishing himself as an irresistible fine gallant.

The beauty of Susanna Shakspere seemed sufficient to entitle her to as prodigal an extent of gallantry as it was in his power to evince. Therefore, he sought every opportunity to meet her when she was abroad, or see her alone when she was at home, at which times there was sure to be as fair a selection of sugared phrases and dainty conceits on his part, as might have sufficed for the use of some half a dozen of the perfectest gallants of the time.

As Susanna felt fully satisfied that one or both these persons would detain her, she was by no means pleased at meeting them. Notwithstanding she was sure they were both well inclined to make their greetings as gallant to her as possible. Right gladly would she have got out of their way—so desirous was she of using all speed to get to Joan Hart's for the one great purpose with which she had left the cottage—but there was no time to avoid them, they came at such speed.

As she fully expected, they both reined in their horses at sight of her, but how much was she astonished, when, instead of the exceeding courteous and flattering attentions she had ever before received from him, Sir George shouted to her with a stern voice and manner;—"So, Mistress Susanna! a pretty daughter thou hast proved thyself—a murrain on thee! I hope thou wilt be satisfied with thy horrible and unnatural disobedience, now that, in consequence of it, thy poor unhappy father, as I have just been credibly informed, is lying at death's door, in his lodging at Southwark." Saying this, Sir George put spurs to his horse, and, followed by his companion, was soon out of sight, leaving the miserable Susanna like one stunned by the overwhelming intelligence she had so unexpectedly heard.

As soon as she had recovered so far as to proceed, she bent her steps towards the well-known dwelling of her jovial kinsman, Tommy Hart. Here she found evidence that all was not as it should be, for not a sign of mirth of any sort was visible.—Strange to say, Tommy and his merry bedfellow were completely chapfallen, and Jo-nas Tictape, who had come to comfort them, was for a marvel standing quietly on his legs—a sure sign he was in no very pleasant humor himself. Their faces, instead of the joyous expression they were wont to have, seemed monstrous sorrowful. Joan was crying, as it was believed, for the first time in her life, and her husband and his gossip looked on the point of following her example.

Susanna soon learned the cause of this wondrous change. They had just learned that her estimable, worthy father was sick of a fever, and reduced to so sore a strait as to be given over by his physicians. She heard the news with an appearance of indifference that made her friends half inclined to think there was an infinite lack of the loving daughter in her; but they did her huge injustice. The blow struck her so forcibly, it seemed to have stilled all her emotions. She could not feel. All sense seemed dead in her for the time.

There was a good deal said by one and the other respecting what had been done in the cottage, and a full measure of indignation was poured out upon the authors of the horrid mischief, but Susanna heard not a word,—and even the forms of those present had ceased to find a place in her vision. She was as one stone deaf and stone blind.

When consciousness returned to her, she sought an excuse for hurrying away, for, in

sooth, she was in no mood for society of any sort, and returned with what haste she could to Shottery. She thought much and deeply, and could not reflect on the imminent danger of her father without a shudder. She frequently endeavored to be alone on that day, and succeeded. Much self-accusation—much bitter remorse—visited her, for not having assured her parent that she had no part in the unnatural proceedings against him; and then there would come questionings as to what was now her proper line of duty.

There can be no doubt that she gave these matters her closest attention; for, early the next morning, before any of the family were astir, after a fervent prayer that God would prosper her in her perilous undertaking, she first crept into the chamber where her mother and sister were asleep, and kissed them both without disturbing them; then, fully equipped for a long journey, and as well furnished for it as it was possible, in her state, she crept softly out of the house. She lingered awhile upon the threshold, and then made her way to the ordinary resting-place of Talbot, who made not the slightest disturbance, for, though he was fully awake, he knew her step, light as it was, and would have known it from a thousand.

She fondled him, and, as she did so, shed many tears, for he had long been regarded by her as the only true friend she had in her own home, and the noble hound whined, and seemed exceeding restless as he returned her caresses, after his fashion. At last, she left him where he was,—doubtless, much against his will—and took her way along the high road. She did not expect in her own neighborhood, if she met any one at that early hour, to be closely questioned as to her being abroad at such a time, as it was no unusual thing for her to be so early afoot; and as she advanced, she did not fear that strangers would be inconveniently curious, for it was a common thing with a country girl, such as she seemed, to be met, going of her errands to the nearest town, as soon as it was day.

Her great care and anxiety was to remember the names of the different towns that lay betwixt her own village and the fair city of Oxford, for her object was to get there with as little delay as possible, and thence to find her way to London. As to her inducement to undertake so long and hazardous a journey for one of her delicate nature, methinks there needs no great trouble to discover it. The deep affection she bore her loved and honored father, her exceeding anxiousness to show she was not so unna-

turally indifferent to him as she feared he had been led to believe, and an earnest hope that she might be enabled, by constant and careful attendance, to administer to his recovery, all helped in it. Such inducement as it was, it seemed to carry her along famously. The very sad expression of her young and beautiful face appeared to be fading away under an aspect of cheerfulness such as she had been a stranger to a long time.

She had so often heard her father mention the manner and way of his journeys to and from London, she was under no fear that, with what she remembered, and what information she might acquire by asking, she should miss her way; nor was she under any apprehension as to the kind of treatment she might meet with. For the first hour or two, she saw none but laborers going to their work in the fields, who gave her a civil greeting and passed on; yet not without being especially impressed in her favor by her neat and pleasing appearance, Anon, a farmer or substantial yeoman would come by on horseback, going to look after his farm-servants, or to be at market betimes, and would venture upon some commendation of her remarkable comeliness, which she would receive with a proper modesty that increased their regard. And then she met wayfarers of all sorts, from the humblest vagrant, trudging wearily afoot, to the powerfulest noble, surrounded by a train of serving-men, in their coats and badges, on fair horses, perchance speeding on an errand of state.

But it often happened that she continued her journey for a long time without meeting any one. When she began to feel tired, she sat herself down a little from the road, and refreshed herself with what victual she had brought with her. The birds were twittering in the hedges, apparently their little hearts greatly rejoicing at the brightness of the day; and every thing, animate and inanimate, looked to be full of a like pleasant spirit. Had she been in the mood, doubtless she would have regarded, with an admiring eye, the richness of the landscape outspread before her. Wood and water, field and orchard, with here and there a windmill, a farm-house, a stately mansion, an ancient church, and a straggling group of cottages, made a choice picture for the eye; but Susanna could not now give her attention to such graces, however attractive they might be. Her thoughts were with her sick parent; and her anxiety to get to him made her regardless of every other thing whatsoever.

She soon finished her hasty meal; and, after a draught at a neighboring spring, continued on her way with renewed spirit. She came to where two roads met, and which of them she ought to take she knew not.—She had no knowledge of where either led to, and there was none near to whom she could make inquiries; but, after a few minutes of uneasy hesitation, she went forward at a hazard. A man passed her soon afterwards, riding on a stout horse; and, seeing a young girl, of a more than ordinary comeliness, going his road, as he thought, he stopped, and was so civil as to ask her to ride beside him as far as she liked. Susanna did not greatly incline to trust herself to a stranger, but her anxiousness to get forward with all haste overbalanced her fears; and, after a scrutiny of the man's features, which were noticeable for good humor and honesty, she accepted his offer, and a minute after was jogging along with him like a farmer and his wife going to market.

Her confidence was not misplaced, for he behaved with a kindness, though of a rustic sort, which showed the goodness of his nature. He asked very few questions, seeming to take his companion for what she appeared, a yeoman's daughter going to the market-town to make purchases, but he readily answered what questions were put to him, by which she gained much information of infinite value to her in her present undertaking. The horse they rode was a great fat creature, of the cart-horse breed, decorated with gay ribbons; and the man was taking it to a cattle-fair, at a town some twenty miles off, with the hope of getting a good price for it. Dobbin's speed, therefore, was not very great; but, as it was faster than her own travelling pace, and promised to forward her twenty miles on her journey, Susanna was well content she had got on his broad back.

On their way, as her companion stopped to victual Dobbin, he took care his fellow-traveller should be provided for in a like manner; and, having borrowed a pad for her to ride on, they resumed their journey. In due time they came to the town to which Dobbin was bound, and not without some sort of regret from his owner, who had got so content with the pleasant company he had had, he was not willing to be so soon quit of it; nevertheless, with a wondrous show of good-will, he was fain to take his leave, and Susanna proceeded alone on her road. She had managed to get such minute directions from her recent acquaintance, that she was now pretty confident she should be

able to find her way without any very great difficulty. The town was crowded by buyers and sellers, and a liberal sprinkling of idle spectators ; but she passed on, heedless of pedlars, mountebanks, dancing-bears, and motions of the rarest quality ever exhibited, though nought was left by them undone to stay her steps.

Having got completely free of the fair, and all its wild uproar and confusion, she found herself passing over a wide common, overgrown with furze, with here and there a pollard, or blackthorn, the deep silence of which contrasted very forcibly with the busy scene she had left behind. Here she had full leisure to consult her thoughts ; and this she did with so huge an intentness, having them directed to a subject of no less interest than her sick father, that she was unaware of being closely watched, and her steps dogged by a savage-looking woman, of a complexion like unto an Indian in brownness, dressed in tattered weeds, coarse and patched, that spoke of vagrancy in every fold, and had a child at her back, with a visage peeping over her shoulder of a like darkness with her own.

She appeared a few steps in advance of the young traveller, and, with a manner half-suppliant, half-threatening, asked an alms. Susanna was startled by her unexpected presence, and her surprise partook largely of alarm when she had glanced at her forbidding features. In the lonely place in which she was, it was by no means desirable to meet such a person. Of her small store she knew she had little to spare, but her eagerness to get rid of the applicant was infinitely stronger than was her desire to retain unbroken the funds she had thought proper to take with her to meet the necessities of her journey. Therefore she took her purse from off her girdle, and untied its strings, intending to give the woman a penny, at the least. The avarice of the beggar was awakened at the sight of the few coins it contained, and a powerful longing began to show itself in her, to have it by hook or by crook ; so she cast a furtive glance towards the town, then along the road, then on both sides of her, jabbering the whilst a rambling jumble of wants and thanksgivings, when she suddenly made a snatch at the purse, but not before Susanna was aware of her design, and drew it so quickly back, she completely failed in her purpose.

Thereupon, with divers horrible imprecations, the strange woman drew, from a bag that hung suspended before her, a long knife, and rushed forward, calling on her to deliver her money, or she would have her heart's

blood. At any other time, Susanna would have been content enough to have escaped the peril she was in, by parting with a much larger sum ; but the sole thought she had at that fearful moment was the impossibility of her ever reaching her sick father's dwelling, were she deprived of it, and therefore she was not content to part with it. She avoided the woman as she made up to her, and the next moment took to running at the very top of her speed.

The young traveller was light of foot, and fear seemed at first to have given her wings, but on turning her head round, and finding she was hotly pursued, her heart seemed to jump to her mouth, and she felt almost incapable of exertion. She screamed as long and loudly as she could, hoping it might bring some one to her assistance, and strained every nerve to increase the distance that was betwixt herself and her pursuer ; but the latter, though not so light of step, and, moreover, burthened with the child at her back, was more used to a fleet pace than the other, and soon began with long strides to gain sensibly upon her. Susanna ran wildly on, half-dead with fright, and screaming at the very top of her voice, and the woman followed, shouting such bloodthirsty resolutions as were like to turn the current of her veins into ice.

Thus they proceeded to a distance of full a quarter of a mile. At last Susanna found she had neither breath nor strength to continue the race a minute longer. Her motions and aspect were those of one frantic with excess of terror, and her cries were awful and heart-rending. The threats of her savage enemy, who tracked her heels like a blood-hound, became every instant closer to her ear, and every step looked as though it brought the murderous knife she had menaced her with nearer to her heart. She began to reel and stumble as she ran, her strength was fast failing her, every thing seemed to swim unsteadily before her, and at last, with a piercing scream of agony, she fell to the ground.

At this terrible moment, when a violent and dreadful end was so imminent, one feeling of regret took entire possession of her. Of losing her young life thus early and thus horribly she thought but little ; the feeling that was almost insupportable arose from despair of being able to show her beloved parent that she was not so vilely unmindful of him as he had been led to suppose. Her pursuer came up with every bad passion written in legiblest character on her gloomy brow. There could be no doubt as to her intentions, and the little imp at her back

seemed to chuckle with unnatural delight, as she hastened, with fierce curses and bloody threats, to wreak her vengeance for the opposition she had met, and then satisfy her dishonest purposes at her leisure.

The fair young traveller had no mercy to expect. Her hours, nay, her minutes, seemed numbered, and drawing to a speedy close. The murderer seized her savagely by the arm with one hand, as she knelt upon her panting body. Susanna murmured a short prayer. The upraised steel glittered before her eyes, and was descending with a force that must have buried it to the very haft in her flesh, when the arm that directed the blow was suddenly grasped from behind, and with a swing, that a person of prodigious strength only could have given, the woman was hurled from her destined victim to a considerable distance. With such force was this done, that the knife was sent flying through the air, and the child was cast out of his resting-place and safely transferred to a clump of fern several yards off; nevertheless, as though in some measure used to treatment of the roughest sort, he raised no outcry, but presently employed himself, as well as he was able, in delivering himself out of the mass of leaves in which he had been thrown.

The person who had thus timely interrupted the beggar-woman's murderous design was a man of mean and slovenly apparel, with a visage bearing no slight pretensions to manly beauty, though having on it a wild and desperate expression. His figure denoted unusual strength and activity, but his whole appearance was in no manner likely to predispose any one very greatly in his favor. He must have leaped out from one of the hollows, or sprung from behind a neighboring clump of brambles, where possibly he might have been lying his length, for his intervention was so sudden as to make it doubtful he had been brought to the fair traveller's assistance from any great distance. His interference was at the very nick of time, and appeared to be as effectual as any one could have desired; the vile wretch, who had been so intent on her deadly purpose, now lay her length on the hard road, apparently stunned by the fall.

Of this the man took no further notice, than some words, perchance a fierce malediction; the language in which they were spoke, sounded uncouth and strange, so that their exact meaning could not be come at. It was, out of all doubt, the common tongue of the gipsies, and on close observation it was as evident that the speaker, though greatly changed for the worse in his visage

and outward appearance, was no other than that villainous murderer whom the reader hath already some knowledge of by the name of Black Sampson.

Since he had behaved so roughly to Simon Stockfish, in his memorable journey to London with his young master, he had lived a terrible restless life. Pursued by an avenging hand, that seemed, to his fancy armed with a deadly weapon that was ever within an inch of his heart, he had wandered from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, in the vain hope of security. It was singular that, though of a more fearless spirit than all the wild tribe of which he was the acknowledged chief, either by some superstitious feeling, or the weight of a wicked conscience, he never could hear the name of the man whose dear and only son he had so ruthlessly slain, without being seized with a sudden panic, and to know that he had been seen in his neighborhood was sufficient to cause him to flee from the place as though pursued by the legions of the damned.

This occurred frequently. He would retire to the wild fastnesses of Wales, and for a time fancy he was safe from further pursuit; but at last he got certain intelligence from his scouts that a gaunt, grey-bearded churl was lurking about his retreat, and off he would be as secretly and expeditiously as possible to the weald of Kent, where, in some apparently impenetrable wood, he would hide himself and his dusky band. Ere he grew confident of security, he would learn that the same terrible form had appeared within some few miles of him, which was quite sufficient to make him abandon, with all speed, his late secure position; and perchance he would seek some lonely moor or solitary common in Devon. Here he would remain, but only for a brief season. He got good reason for knowing the untiring blood-hound was upon his track, and away he started, like a hunted deer, to the deep caves on the rough coast of Cornwall.

Mayhap he would abide here in peace—in such peace as the wicked know, whereof he knew about the least of any; but, when he thought from all absence of rumor touching his enemy, he might rest secure in his deep concealment, he was sure to learn that one answering but too truly to his description had arrived at the next village, and at once he would quit the place which heretofore looked as though it might have defied the very searchingest eye, and never rest foot till he had buried himself in one of the most remote and savagest parts in the highlands of Scotland. Here even he met with the same fortune. The old shepherd dog-

ged his heels with a pertinacity that was truly marvellous. Go where he would, hide as closely as he might, use the cunningest disguise, sooner or later Wattie Elliott was certain to get so close to his neighborhood, as to induce him to quit it with all speed, and in the terriblest fear.

Although Black Sampson avoided a personal encounter with his pursuer, this was by no means the case with divers of his trusty followers. They felt no compunctions or dread of any sort; and, seeing the straits in which they were put by their chief through his sudden and desperate changes, as well as being made sufferers by the wildness and unreasonableness of his humor, were well inclined to put an end to it in the only way which presented itself to them. With this object they banded together, and lay in wait for the old man. But for a long time he avoided falling into their hands. He seemed as cunning in escaping their toils as he was in following up the fierce chase he was pursuing. Nevertheless, he did not succeed at all times. Though he made the most determined resistance, which cost some of his assailants their lives, he was at last overpowered, beat with sticks, and left for dead.

This result achieved, all felt sure their leader would speedily recover his wonted greatness of soul. They assured him his enemy had got his quietus, and related how completely it had been done. A month or two might pass over, and hearing no sign of him, Black Sampson would relax somewhat in his precautions, when, lo! to his horror, he would himself, when abroad, catch a distant view of his well remembered figure; and off the outlaw would start on the instant, like a heron who spyeth the hawk afar off. Again the gray-haired shepherd would be set upon, and, after a furious contest—not without much injury to many of the assailants—he would sink at their feet pierced with innumerable deadly wounds. Again the terror-struck gipsy would be persuaded he had nothing to fear, and again, after a due interval, he would find the slaughtered man, as hale and vigorous as ever, close upon his footsteps.

At last, the wildest of the band began to be as fear-struck as their chief. The old shepherd had been shot at by all their best marksmen; he had been stabbed in the vitalest parts; he had been beaten, as it were, to death with heavy cudgels; nevertheless, he was certain to appear in their sight in some brief space as whole as though nothing had happened to him—it looked as though

he bore a charmed life, or was a creature not of this world. So deep did this impression enter their minds, that they forebore ever after from molesting him in any way, and were as ready to be a hundred miles from him at all times as was Black Sampson himself, who felt a secret assurance that his enemy had so unconquerable a spirit, he could not or would not be allowed to die till his just revenge upon the murderer of his son had been fully satisfied; and this haunted him so by night and by day with such continual apprehension, that he grew to wear the altered appearance he possessed at this date.

After so forcibly separating the woman, who was one of his own tribe, from her threatened victim, he raised the latter gently from the ground, and seemed to marvel at her singular beauty. Susanna, though in a horrible fear, and with scarce strength to breathe, she was so spent with running, still held possession of her senses, albeit it was with but a slight thread. She understood she had been saved from a frightful death, but, on the first glance she got of her deliverer, she seemed to have little cause for satisfaction—so dreadful a visage to look on had she never seen before. It was so unnaturally wild and terrible, she shuddered as she gazed upon it; nevertheless, she made no effort to remove herself from his hold, but lay helpless on his arm, as though she could not take away her eyes from the unnatural, searching gaze that was fixed upon her.

What feelings the contemplation of such comeliness, united to so much helplessness and innocence, might have created in the breast of this caitiff, cannot very clearly be known; but, of whatever sort they may have been, it is out of all manner of doubt they were right summarily put an end to, for, on his quick ear detecting the sound of distant footsteps, he presently turned his gaze in that direction, and, on the instant, with a marvellous lack of ceremony, dropped his gentle burthen to the ground, and, with a cry of alarm, ran off at the very top of his speed. It was soon manifest what had been the cause of this sudden movement. A man was seen passing over the common with marvellous quickness of foot; and as he drew nearer, it was observed he was of a gaunt figure, ill and rudely clad, with a fierce and haggard expression of countenance. On he came—in sooth an awful sight—his grey hair and beard of unnatural length, streaming in the wind; his eyes sunken under shaggy overhanging brows.

yet gleaming with an unnatural fire, and one hand brandishing threateningly an open dagger.

As he passed swiftly by our gentle traveller, she could not believe he was any thing human ; and the unearthly manner in which she heard him raise, as he hurried on, his ordinary cry of " Blood ! Blood !" seemed enough to turn her to stone. It was the old shepherd in pursuit of the murderer of his dear son. On he sped with an eagerness far beyond what his more youthful days had witnessed ; and, holding the murderer in sight, he kept at his heels over bush and hollow, hedge and ditch, till both were lost to sight in the depths of a neighboring wood.

Susanna had just begun to breathe with a little more freedom than she had done for some minutes past, when she was again overwhelmed with deadly fear by the sight of the woman from whose murderous hand she had so lately been rescued again making towards her. Doubtless she could now have wreaked her vengeance uninterrupted, and have plundered her at her leisure, and such it is more than probable was her intent ; but at this critical time, a company of carriers from the fair made their appearance at a little distance, and she was fain to content herself with breathing the horriblest threats ever heard, as she recovered her weapon, and then replacing her child at her back, who had been all the while playing about as though he required no better nursing than had Romulus and Remus, she took herself quickly off in a contrary direction.

The carriers, who were simple men, marvelled greatly at the tale they heard when they came up ; and when the fair traveller appealed to them for protection, so eager were they to render it, they were ready to go to loggerheads before they could settle who should be the fortunate man to guard so much beauty and innocence. At last the matter was settled in some sort satisfactorily, and Susanna was raised on a pack-saddle on a fine mule that belonged to one of the party, all agreeing that she should ride upon it, because it was the goodliest beast of them all, and set off, nothing loath, in their company.

It was curious to see the sudden change that appeared, as soon as Susanna took her place in the midst of them. They had approached in very boisterous style, with an abundance of rude jests, and prodigal display of riotous mirth, consequent doubtless on the long draughts they had taken in fellowship at the last town ; but now, as though by common consent, each one put a bridle on

his tongue, so that there should be no offence in it, and essayed to distinguish himself above his fellows by courtesy, seriousness, and all manner of civil speech, whereof the consequence was, our late terror-struck traveller quickly recovered her proper spirits, and journeyed on, with no other wish than for increased speed, that she might the sooner reach the lodging of her dear father in Southwark.

No further adventure happened till they arrived at Oxford, wherein she had scarce entered when a number of Oxford scholars, struck at first by the strangeness of so fair a creature riding in the midst of a parcel of rude carriers, were for a closer acquaintance, and in their admiration becoming too familiar, to the great scandal of divers of her simple company, one must needs break the head of the foremost, which was so resented by his associates, that a fierce attack was made upon the offender and all his fellows. These defended themselves with such spirit, emboldened by the presence of their gentle fellow-traveller, in whose defence they considered they were fighting, that soon a most violent battle raged betwixt them. The scholars every moment were reinforced ; nevertheless, the carriers with their cudgels fought so desperately, many of their numerous assailants got sore hurt.

Susanna sat on her mule, wringing her hands, begging and praying each party to leave off their quarrel ; but the greater part of the scholars, who had seen nothing of the beginning of the affray, believed that she was held against her will by the knaves in whose company she was, and that her distress was occasioned by her detention, felt a chivalrous desire to rescue her from out of the hands of such Philistines, and they returned to the charge again and again with increased numbers and tenfold fury. The street was a scene of the wildest riot seen there for many a day. All were attracted to the neighborhood, alarmed by the horrible outcries and fierce contention that raged in that spot, and, as is usually the case in disturbances in that fair city, they took different sides. The citizens, satisfied that where the scholars were fighting it must be against them, without question of any sort ranged themselves on the opposite side, and with whatever weapons they could get, gave battle furiously by the side of the carriers.

In this way every instant the fight was increasing with such vast strides, that it looked as though two rival armies were contending for mastery. The more peaceable sort were in a monstrous fright, and the au-

thorities were getting ready as strong a force of constables, as they had at their commandment for the immediate quelling of the riot, and securing the disturbers of the peace. By this time the scholars had grown to so huge a force, that they had been able to beat back her doughty champions and their now numerous adherents, and were in triumph leading away in the midst of them the unoffending cause of the battle they considered they had so gloriously won. Their shouts of victory and martial songs drowned every attempt the poor distressed damsel made to show them how little reason she had to be content with their services. None knew what was to be done with her, and none troubled themselves to think, their minds were so filled with their hard-fought success.

As they crowded along in this state, they were made aware of the approach of the strong force of foot sent by the civil authorities against them, among whom were several of the principal persons in the University on horseback; but, in their present mood, there is little doubt the victorious scholars would have given them instant battle. It so chanced, however, that the delectable young creature they felt assured they had rescued from unmannerly knaves, spied, amongst the horsemen, two gallants, whose persons she recognized with a vehement cry of pleasure. There could be no doubt as to who they were. They were Sir George Carew and young Master Clopton, then journeying to London, who from curiosity had joined the civil power, to behold the quelling of the violent disturbance that had so unaccountably sprung up in the city. By singular good fortune they immediately recognized her, which was in some sort easy, she being on her mule, above the heads of the riotous assembly which surrounded her.

Seeing her, like one in the very absolutest distress, as if calling and making signs to them to come to her, Sir George and his companion marvelling to behold her in so strange a company, put spurs to their horses, and dashed forward; but they would have been roughly handled, had not the old soldier had the exceeding good policy to cry out that the young female they had got amongst them was his fellow-traveller, and he desired she might be allowed to return to her friends. Many knowing Sir George, made way for him, and others did the same, seeing he was a person of note by his worshipful figure, and the number of his retainers, with their blue coats and silver badges,

so that the two found no difficulty in making their way to the distressed damsel.

Sir George appeared to have forgot his late cause of displeasure, as he rode to her side with the courteous bearing towards women so familiar to him; but when he listened to her hurried narrative, and discovered that she had gone through such troubles and dangers out of her anxious desire to minister to the wants of her sick father, his very estimable good friend, he seemed to regard her with unusual interest, interrupting her with many soldier-like commendations, and bidding her to be of good heart, for he was her assured friend till death, and she should travel in his company without delay of any sort.

Then, turning to the crowd, in a brief and energetic speech, he showed them the mistake they had been under, and begged them as a proper token of respect for the fair damsel for whom they had so manfully exerted themselves, to disperse each to their homes as speedily as possible. This proper advice was instantly acted upon, and in a brief space all were making what haste they could to their several colleges; perchance, some using the more expedition from a wholesome fear of punishment. Sir George did not find much more difficulty in satisfying the authorities and the citizens, and he allowed but little time to pass over before he sought out the trusty carriers, to reward them for their exceeding commendable conduct.

In due time he set off, with the fair Susanna, on a goodly palfrey, in his company, for London, and they arrived the next day, without further adventure, at Master Shakespeare's lodgings in the Liberty of the Clink.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A honey shower rains from her lips,
Sweet lights shine in her face;
She hath the blush of virgin mind,
The mind of viper's race.

These things we write merrily, but we would that the reader should observe God's just judgments, and how that he can comprehend the worldly-wise in their own wisdom, make their table to be a snare to trap their own feet, and their own purposed strength to be their own destruction.

JOHN KNOX.

FROM what hath already been stated, mine especial friend, the reader, hath good warrant for suspecting that our young student

of medicine was not in such good hands in the dwelling of that famous physician, Master Dr. Posset, as his excellent mother trusted he was, and that the abundance of admirable counsel she had so impressively given him, touching his behavior to women, had not been altogether superfluous. But whatever little insight there may have been obtained by the progress of this story, as to the characters of the several inmates of the doctor's house, it is essential for its full understanding that something more should be known. With the object of furnishing such information, the reader is urgently requested to allow himself to be transported to a certain closet, in which the doctor, after the labors of the day were over, was wont to solace himself in private with a few glasses of sherris-sack, and the enjoyment of the new fashion of smoking a pipe of tobacco.

This closet was lighted by one small window, and was wainscoted all round from ceiling to floor, with projecting cupboards at the corners, in which, under lock and key, were kept the napery, and other household stuff, of which he was possessed. There was an oak table in the middle of the room, on which were placed the customary tankard, and two glasses, with a small brass-bound box, wherein was kept the Indian weed with which he furnished his pipe. Doctor Posset sat, leaning against a high-backed chair, his legs resting upon a tall stool; he was dressed with a formal sort of neatness—a compromise between the plainness generally affected by the old and the bravery of the young physician of his day. His hair and beard, though scant and grey, were kept in excellent order by the barber; and though his years were far past the best, there was a piercing quickness in his eye that made him seem more youthful than he was. As he had lost all his teeth, his mouth was drawn in with monstrous little improvement to his wrinkled and leaden visage; and when he took on himself the humor of laughing, he looked like one of those grinning satyrs sometimes to be found carved on the stalls of our ancient cathedrals.

It would be no difficult matter for any skillful peruser of faces to have guessed, after a careful observation of that of this famous physician, in his private hours, the sort of character he was. There was a mixture of craftiness and self-conceit in the continual expression of his visage that occasionally made way for a sort of sneering devilishness that became it no better. Of this craftiness he prided himself extravagantly, although it was merely just sufficient to keep his neck out of a halter, and his person from the

rough handling, as it had been whispered, he had too frequently deserved. Obsequiousness, impudency, and some chances of fortune, had greatly befriended him. To those more ignorant than himself, he ever assumed a marvellous extent of knowledge, whilst, to any likely to be better informed, he cautiously held his peace, and looked as profoundly sage as he could.

On the side opposite to that on which he sat stood an empty chair, and the doctor seemed by his frequent glance at the door to expect some person to fill it. Nor had he long to wait. Presently the door opened, and there entered the seductive Millicent, apparently in the best of humors, or assuming such for some secret purpose. She soon sat herself down, and, as was her wont, proceeded to fulfil her first duty—the making of the saek; the which she did with a constant affectation of light-hearted gossiping. Had her too-devoted lover, John Hall, been present, he would have marvelled hugely to have heard his melancholy mistress making a most bitter mockery of the grief of Tabitha Thatchpole, her especial friend—as she had led him to believe—because her boy Launce had given his indentures a fair pair of heels, and run away with Martin Poins, as it was supposed, to try their fortunes on board an armed ship that had sailed down the river, bound for the Spanish main; and he had marvelled still more to note the exceeding heartiness of her good will towards her father, of whom she never spoke to him in confidence, without conveying to his mind the idea that he was a monster to be regarded only with execration.

Her merry, biting jests, and the excellency of the sack she had brewed with even more care than usual, had their expected effect. The old man was in the mood she desired. Sitting herself to the enjoyment of her own glass of the exquisite beverage she had been manufacturing, she gradually and skilfully led the conversation of her companion's most favorite subject, the success he had had as a gallant.

The old fellow threw himself back in his seat, his satyr-like visage growing more hideous as the expression of vanity which lighted it with smiles became more intense. He smoked on and chuckled, occasionally interrupting his associate to add more important features to the things she reminded him of with such singular satisfaction. Then she chid him slightly, and seemed to think it was high time he should give over such unbecoming matters, take to himself a wife, and live in matrimonial respectability for the rest of his days.

He fell into this humor very readily, as he had long entertained the desire of having for his wife his daughter's little friend, Mildred ; but began to despair of its accomplishment, as she, besides being young enough to be his grand-daughter, did nought but make sport of him. The wily Millicent knew this well, and had determined to turn it to her own profit. It matters little what was said on both sides ; suffice it that a bargain was entered into betwixt the two, that the father was to pay to the daughter the sum of two hundred crowns as a marriage-portion with her betrothed, on the day Mildred became his wife.

She stayed not long after this, excusing herself that she had much to do to bring matters to the conclusion desired, and thereupon left him to enjoy his customary afternoon's sleep which followed upon his stuffing his skin so full it could hold no more.

Truly she had much to do. To effect the infamous sale she had set on foot, there was no small difficulty. There was first to be got over a strong feeling of dislike in her friend to the old man, considering him only as an acquaintance, which doubtless would amount to abhorrence, if he were to be proposed to her as a husband. The disparity of age was not greater than the disparity of disposition. Even could that natural feeling be removed which disinclines the youthful tasting the first rich draught of life to partake of the cup of another which hath nothing left of it but the lees, the opposition of thoughts and feelings, pursuits, habits, and tastes is hardly possible to be overcome. Doubtless there are some to be met with, among womankind in general, who are possessed of that singular indifference which renders them insensible of any preference, and there can be no question divers aged persons may be found more worthy the entire love of the young heart than others of fewer years, but these are extreme cases.

In the instance here given, nothing could be more atrocious ; but the utter selfishness of the crafty Millicent took no note of any thing but her own base ends. She sold her youthful acquaintance, and cared for nothing in the wide world save the price she was to obtain for the infamous bargain.

There was one thing in the aspect of affairs, which she could not regard without uneasiness. For objects of her own, she had done all she could to foster the growth of friendly feelings betwixt her betrothed and her new lover ; this had led to a more than ordinary affectionate intimacy in the young men for each other ; but now, as she found it more to her interest to wed the former, it

was requisite that she should put herself to particular pains to lessen this attachment. It might, in spite of all her care to prevent it, lead to so profound a confidence, that her double-dealing and infamous views regarding both would surely be discovered.

There was still a great obstacle, and this was no other than the much-abused John Hall. His love for the worthless creature by whom he had been so played upon had, by this time, become the better impulse of his life. The frequent recourse she had to mystery he had got so used to, that however strange the matter might seem, he put it down to her humor, and gave himself no further concern in it.

We will, however, with the reader's consent, penetrate into another part of the same tenement. This was the chamber in which were made all the surgical and pharmaceutical preparations wanted for Master Doctor Posset's numerous patients. There were in it the usual objects that make the vulgar marvel when entering such places, to wit—the stuffed crocodile hanging from the ceiling, a multitude of bottles and jars and gallipots of sundry sorts, with strange characters marked upon them, a shelf of monstrosities preserved in spirits, sundry bundles of simples hung up to dry, a nest of drawers with Latin names no each, a strong table with vials, measures, weights, scales, knives, scissors, pestles and mortars, and the like necessary things, for the use of a chirurgeon ; and a large iron mortar, fixed on a huge block of wood, with a famous ponderous pestle of the same metal, stood in the centre of the same chamber.

At the further end, opposite to a window, was a stout chair for patients to sit in when undergoing any operations. Close to it was another table, containing basons and other vessels for making infusions, decoctions, and syrups ; with tape, plaster, bandages and ointment-pots, for the dressing of wounds. On one side was a chimney, where, on the fire, in an open earthen pipkin, some preparation was simmering, intended as a restorative for a sick courtier, which was carefully watched by John Hall, who, ever and anon, stirred it carefully with a ladle. Leonard was engaged at the large table, with an open book before him, weighing and mixing together certain powders, and then dividing them into small papers, for the barren wife of a gouty alderman. They were intent upon a discussion connected with the art they were studying, when they were interrupted by the entrance of a gentleman borne like unto a dead person in the arms of Ned Allen and Will Kempe, whilst a

crowd of players, among whom was Ben Jonson, followed at their heels, with concern and alarm depicted in all their countenances. Even the humorous visage of Will Kempe had a cast of melancholy that might even have become one at a funeral.

The party were shown into an adjoining chamber, used only by the Doctor for private consultations with his patients, and the person they had brought placed convenient on a table. He gave no sign of life, which the players did not fail to notice with an increased length of visage. The physician was hastily sent for, and all things were got ready handy for his using—plasters, bandages, and the like, with certain surgical-looking knives and probing instruments, in case an operation should be required. The poor players scarcely breathed, they seemed so frightened at this array, assured that the danger must be imminent that called for such ominous-looking things, and whispered to one another brief sentences significatory of the badness of the case.

At last Master Doctor came, not in the best humor that his sleep should be disturbed. Either by accident or design, a towel had been thrown over the face of his patient, so that he was not recognized by the Doctor. The latter asking what had happened, he was told that the poor gentleman who was there in so pitiable a case, had given some offence to Ben Jonson, which he could not stomach; so, making him draw, he attacked him furiously, and, it was believed, had killed him outright, for he presently dropped like a stone at his feet, and had since given no sign of life, save one or two most piteous groans, that seemed to denote the utter rending of his soul from his body.

"Tis a sad case," said one.

"Indeed, 'tis most lamentable," added another.

"Sblood!" exclaimed Ben Jonson, greatly vexed, "am I also to have this poor gentleman's death at my door? I had rather a hundred pound I had never set eyes on him."

"Thou art ever of too hasty a spirit, Ben," observed Master Allen, "and I doubt not it will some day or other put thine own life in jeopardy from the hands of the law."

"I fear it will go hard with Ben at Assize," said another of the players gravely. "The dead man's friends may pursue him with such rigor, he may chance to find himself in nigh upon as bad a case himself."

"I fear hugely he his dead," said the first.

"Assuredly there is no room to doubt it," replied a second.

All this time the doctor, assisted by his apprentices, examined the body of the wound-

ed man very carefully; but he lay stiff and motionless, as though all such care was superfluous.

"Alack, poor gentleman!" exclaimed Master Allen.

"Alack, indeed!" added Will Kempe.

Now the doctor, looking somewhat puzzled, felt the pulse of the dead man—many there present thinking such as unnecessary a thing as could be; and in a moment pulled the towel off his face.

"Captain Swashbuckler, o' my life!" he cried in a monstrous surprise, as he caught sight of his well known visage; then, turning to the company, added, "Had I not seen it with mine own eyes, I would not have believed there were in the world such easy gulls as those I now see before me. Be assured, my masters, that the valiant Captain hath received no wound of any sort, and is at this present in as perfect health as ever he was in his life."

"Why the cozening rascal!"

"Out on the pitiful knave!"

"Get thee gone, thou intolerable base trickster!" exclaimed the players.

"A goodly football, my masters!" cried Will Kempe; "and i' faith, we'll play a fine game." Thereupon the poor captain, as he found his trick discovered, and was for getting out of the place as fast as he could, as soon as he was on his legs, was sent forward with a hearty kick by the last speaker, at which he turned round to mark who did it; but had scarce done so, when he received a like favor from Ben Jonson, given with so fine a zeal he was thrust to the end of the chamber. Nevertheless, his stay there was exceeding brief; one of the players who had recently been most concerned at his supposed death propelled him from it forthwith, after a fashion that was so quickly and closely imitated, that he was soon thrust into the street, amid the jeers and laughter of those who had waited outside to learn whether the wounded man was past cure.

Whilst the players were vigorously following their game, John Hall was surprised by the appearance of Simon Stockfish, with whom, after one or two of their marvellous brief speeches on either side he presently left the house.

CHAPTER XIX.

His mirth was the pure spirit of various wit,
Yet never did his God or friends forget ;
And when deep talk and wisdom came in view,
Retired and gave to them their due.
For the rich help of books he always took,
Though his own searching mind before
Was so with notions written o'er,
As if wise nature had made that her book.

COWLEY.

The tender-hearted Susanna had now the full enjoyment of her own sweet will. She was in constant and most loving attendance upon the father, whom she regarded with so dutiful an affection, to show which she had put herself to a difficult and perilous journey, on foot and unattended save by the courage of her own pure heart; but though she had escaped the knife of the assassin, and was secure from the insults and rude questioning of unmannerly strangers, she had to meet with treatment of a far more intolerable sort.

The mind of her sick father was a prey to the fantasies of a wild delirium, the constant theme of which was the ingratitude of his daughters. On this he would ever and anon dilate very movingly—in especial dwelling on the undutiful behavior of his favorite Susanna, after so touching a fashion, that the poor damsel, who was close at hand, feared her heart would break, it did touch her so deeply. Nevertheless, she would on no account allow her feelings to betray her; so, keeping up a high heart, albeit it was often a most aching one, she busied herself in ministering night and day to the wants of him who spoke of her so hardly.

Sleep took she none, at least none of any account, for at all hours she was to be found playing the faithful nurse with such admirable matchless skill, it was the marvel of all who beheld it. The pillow was smoothed for the aching head, the dampness wiped from the burning brow; the parched mouth was kept moist with refreshing drinks, and the burning skin bathed with cooling lotions; the various medicines were administered to the patient by none but her hand; the little matters of diet she herself prepared and placed before him; every comfort that could be procured for one in his hapless condition she obtained for him; and it was her musical voice that sought to make him, as readily as might be, follow the directions of his physician, and the dictates of her tender love. The words she spoke soothed the sick man, but the voice he did not recog-

nize; he appeared to understand the great comfort of her careful nursing, but the once loved form passed before him as that of a stranger.

This was a sore trial to her, but she held up bravely; and none who saw the untiring patience and sweetness of disposition with which she fulfilled her office, could have guessed how piercingly her poor heart ached the while.

Her loving attentions were well seconded by John Hall, whose assistance had been hastily sought, with the fullest confidence in its superiority over that of all other doctors whatsoever, by his father's faithful follower, Simon Stockfish. Together had they watched at the bedside of their suffering patient, seeking to take immediate advantage of every favorable symptom—together had they administered to his wants and provided for his comforts. Surely had no man in the like strait such great heed taken of him, as had Master Shakspeare in this sharp sickness of his. The young physician employed all the resources of his art to conquer it, partly to serve his humble friend, and in a great measure from the deep interest he felt in him whom he was attending. He soon learned in what nearness of relation his matchless nurse stood to him, and the frantic declarations of the poor gentleman did inform him sufficiently of how matters stood betwixt them. This, as may be supposed, did not in any way lessen his respect, or check his sympathy. Indeed its effect was exactly the reverse. Simon Stockfish also afforded such service to his sick master as it was in his power to perform, and did it with an earnest affection and reverence which could only be exceeded by the more ardent love of his devoted daughter. These three in their constant attendance followed their natural inclinations, for they spoke marvellous little, but it would have been difficult to have found the like number of persons who, under any circumstances felt one-half as much as they did.

The chamber in which Master Shakspeare lay was of a fair size and height—as indeed were all the principal ones throughout the house—one of the best in all Southwark, it having been, at no distant date, the mansion of a person of worship, from whom Master Shakspeare had bought it, with a great part of its chattels and household gear. All round was a goodly suit of tapestry hangings, representing certain notable scenes and adventures in the life of William the Conqueror, with labels issuing from the mouths of divers of the chief characters. A large

window, or casement, which was thrown open, gave a refreshing view of the green trees of the adjoining gardens, whence the small birds were heard twittering lustily their cheerful chorus. Through an open door, a view was got of part of the next chamber, up to the window which overlooked the street, with glimpses of its quaintly-carved cupboard; some one or two tall chairs, having about them a cittern, a rapier, and a hat and feather; a table with a rich coverlet, and its goodly burthen of books, manuscripts, writing utensils, and other furniture of a like sort.

On each side of the bed's head was a stout arm-chair, wherein the watchers of the sick man were wont to keep guard. There was a small table at a convenient distance from the casement, covered with a fair cloth of damask, whereon was a mirror in an ebony frame, with an antique vase of fresh flowers before it, which were prettily imagined in the glass, having on one side a crystal bottle daintily figured over, and a large goblet of a like material and fashion on the other, containing a delectable beverage for the patient's own drinking; whilst in a china plate that stood betwixt them, in front of the vase, were grapes and oranges, whereof the latter one was sliced ready for his eating. In a corner adjoining were the proper utensils for washing, and nigh the fireplace was a table of polished oak, on which were sundry bottles and vessels, and all conveniences for the concocting of such articles of diet and drink as were deemed necessary for him; and it was here that the neat-handed Susanna was wont to prepare them.

Elsewhere were other chairs, and also other necessary furniture, the chief of which was a massive oaken press, for the containing of linen and wardrobe. The bedstead was handsomely provided with all proper matters of bedding, most conspicuous of which was a rich counterpane, such as adorned the beds of the wealthiest sort in those days. With his head supported by pillows, the occupant of this chamber was there and then lying, his noble visage bearing evident marks of the ravages of sickness; but, his beard and hair being new-trimmed, and his face constantly and carefully refreshed with the necessary ablutions, he showed no signs of that neglect in such things which others less lovingly attended never fail to exhibit.

John Hall and Simon Stockfish stood on each side of him, regarding their charge with a vigilant eye, yet even with more

seriousness than ordinary, for he was in one of his raving moods, and it behoved them to interpose when there was a likelihood of his doing himself a mischief. And where was the ever-watchful and loving Susanna? In honest truth, she had but turned her head away to conceal a tear that came unbidden to her eyes, through hearing the sharp reproaches which her fond, distracted father did heap on her, whereof every word seemed armed with a barb that pierced and tore her sensitive heart to an agony insupportable. She considered she had merited it all, hard as it was to bear, for she loved her father with such entireness, she could not believe him capable, even in his distraction, of any unkind behavior to her. Therefore was she now raising a look to Heaven with so strong an appeal in it, it could have been withstood by nothing of mortal nature, her beautiful figure supported by one hand leaning heavily against the table, striving to recover such composure of mind as would allow her again to attend diligently to the duties of her office.

But her brave spirit was soon to have its fitting recompense. Her loving nursing had in time its proper effect. The sick man mended apace; and be sure there were no pains spared to hasten his recovery. But greatly as she rejoiced—and no imagination can do justice to the exceeding exquisiteness of her feelings, as she beheld this much-desired improvement—there was one consequence attending on it which she allowed with infinite reluctance—this was banishment from the sick chamber.

From the many intolerable speeches she had heard, she was painfully impressed with the opinion that, when her dear father should come to know her, it might perchance make him worse, and he would be sure to bid her begone for a disobedient daughter, that deserved not the pleasure of attending upon him. Therefore she kept herself in the next chamber as privily as possible, albeit she took good heed to have constant intelligence of aught relating to the object of her so much love that could be told her, and was as busily engaged in providing for his wants and comforts as though she had remained with him.

Whilst Master Shakspeare remained in this deplorable state, and even from the first notice of it that was bruted abroad, there came to his lodging every day vast numbers of persons, some his very good friends and gossips, and others known unto him only by the fame of his singular great worthiness, and these were of various classes and con-

ditions, from the humblest drawer at "The Mitre," or call-boy at "The Globe," with whom his pleasant speech and liberal hand made him ever a monstrous favorite, to the highest noble in the kingdom, who had enjoyed many a well-spent hour in taking into his mind the prodigal store of delightful thoughts and images he had furnished in the exercise of his matchless talents. His brother players, all the principal writers, the most notable of the citizens, and the most worthy of the courtiers, either came themselves or sent continually to inquire what hopes were had of him ; and Simon Stockfish was, out of sheer necessity, forced to abandon his humor of taciturnity somewhat, he had such a horrible press of questions forced upon him.

Of those who were most anxious in their inquiries and most frequent in their visits were Master Edward Allen and Sir George Carew. Nothing could exceed the former's concern at the pitiful plight to which his assured friend had been reduced ; and he straightway sent his excellent partner to afford Susanna such advice and help as the exigency of the case needed ; and well and kindly did she fulfil his wishes. Sir George was no less deeply interested in him, and was continually bringing or sending such things for his use as he thought might advance him in his recovery. To the marvellous sweet satisfaction of all, as hath been said, his worst symptoms left him. He grew conscious of all that was being done, and was evidently gaining strength rapidly. One thing was in especial noticeable at this time—that he carefully avoided all manner of allusion to his family. What was so recently the one sole theme of his thoughts and of his tongue, was now, as it were, driven from both—perchance from dread its entertainment might induce the evil consequences he was still smarting under.

This state of things Sir George Carew liked not at all, as it made a difficulty in what he was waiting to venture on, on the first favorable opportunity, which he knew not how to get over. Nevertheless, the matter he had undertaken could not be delayed ; therefore, when the sick man grew sufficiently Hale to converse on ordinary topics, he began, though not without some misgiving, to come to the point with him. Master Shakspeare was then dressed for the first time since his sickness, and sitting in his chair, leaning against a cushion, and inhaling the invigorating breeze that came through the open casement, for it was a most balmy day, that was like to fill his mind

with all manner of healthy impressions. His noble features still bore on them the marks of sickness, but the old expression of infinite good humor seemed forcing itself through the painful gravity so deeply impressed upon them. He was informing his friend of all that he remembered of his recent sufferings, and entered at length, and not without some show of animation, into certain fantasies, under the influence of which he had spoken and acted.

"But what I can by no means satisfy myself of," said he, "is a marvellous powerful impression my disordered senses have retained, touching a fair vision, by which I was constantly visited during the fiercest stage of my malady."

"A fair vision ! I warrant you now some black-eyed wench," observed Sir George, merrily.

"To the best of my memory, her eyes were of no such color," replied Master Shakspeare ; "but rather of the deep pure blue, such as the heavens seem made of in the sunniest weather. Indeed, she seemed in her majestic motions, her youthful grace, and most seraphic voice, a creature of the skies, rather than of the earth."

"Prythee say no more of her by way of description. Will, for my mouth waters villainously," said his friend, in his usual cheerful humor. "But, what was her errand ? doubtless, she took your heart into her keeping without more ado, and proclaimed you to be her sworn servant."

"Her errand was that of a ministering angel," answered the other, fervently. "She soothed my pains, she created my comforts ; her delicate hand smoothed my pillow ; her loving eyes watched my rest. All that I knew of ease, or comfort, or satisfaction of any sort, seemed to come at her commandment, and was provided by her care."

"A golden girl, truly!" exclaimed Sir George, right heartily. "Had she ever a sister?"

"I fear not," replied his friend ; "I cannot think there can be two of such a sort. But I know not how it was—of a sudden I missed her. I felt no more her dainty hand upon my fevered brow ; I heard no more the gentle rustling of her dress, or the scarce audible sound of her light footsteps, as she glided like a creature of air about my chamber ; and her soft voice, every tone of which was the delicatest music, I listened for in vain. In brief, the deprivation of this looked so intolerable, notwithstanding I was conscious of greatly amended health, that more than once I felt disposed to have endured

the full fierceness of my malady, to have enjoyed again the wondrous solace I found in this exquisite vision."

"Saw you nothing in the features of this matchless creature, familiar to you?" inquired Sir George, in a more earnest tone than he had hitherto used.

"Nothing," replied Master Shakspeare.

"They in no way reminded you of, in no long time since, the chief object of your love and worship, your own fair daughter Susanna?" asked his companion; whereas the other seemed greatly moved, and could not for some lapse of time answer the question.

"I pray you, Sir George," he at last said, evidently with some difficulty of utterance, "out of the especial regard you have had for me so long, never more to mention to me that unworthy name."

"That can I not promise, Master Shakspeare," said Sir George, gravely. "In sooth, I must needs have your serious attention to much in which that name is nearly concerned."

"Torture not a bruised spirit!" cried his companion, greatly excited; "I cannot beed you. I am in no way capable of enduring any allusion to one by whose horrible disobedience and ingratitude I have been so sorely tried."

"Hear me this once," urged his friend. "For be assured I have that to tell which is worth your hearing." Master Shakspeare said not a word, but, with a distracted sort of gesture, seemed to say he would have none of it. "You have spoken of disobedience and ingratitude," continued Sir George. "These are bitter charges to make against a child. Suppose, now, for a moment, they should be without any manner of warrant. Suppose that the very child thus villainously accused should, at the imminent hazard of her life, and, despite all difficulties in the way of such an undertaking, as soon as she got knowledge that the father she so dearly loved—she cared not to suffer a thousand deaths to prove it—was sick of a fever, and like to die in a city several days journey from her, she set off afoot, and, unattended, travelled through a strange country, every step of which was attended with perils enough to daunt the most courageous of her sex; and, after enduring and triumphing over all with unheard of constancy and patience, made her way to his sick room, where night and day she fulfilled the tender office of nurse, with a sweetness of disposition and entireness of devotion, which made all marvel to see her. Suppose now that the blessed creature, you thought was

the offspring of a disordered brain, was in truth no vision at all, but a real and palpable being, gifted with all the noblest graces of womanhood, who did keep watch and ward, and tended over you like a ministering angel, as you have said, and suppose this matchless creature of such infinite perfection was no other than the much-abused Susanna—what say you then?"

Master Shakspeare had listened to this strange speech with increasing interest, till interest grew to amazement, and amazement became a wild, bewildering phrenzy of excitement, that could keep within no bounds. As soon as he could find speech, he exclaimed, very urgently, "Can this be true?"

"Ay, on mine honor and life, is it, every word!" replied the other.

"Where is she? Bring her to me. I pray you let a fond father have the satisfaction of holding her to his heart." He had scarce said the words, when Susanna, who had previously been placed in the adjoining chamber in readiness, rushed into his arms.

Her joy was not loud, but unfathomably deep. She laid her head upon his breast, and wept. He disturbed her not, but ever and anon seemed to draw her to him with a firmer pressure, as if to assure himself she was still in his embrace. All this while they were alone, for Sir George Carew had suddenly slipped away when he had secured his desired end.

With the happy Susanna, all cares and pains were now in as perfect an oblivion as though they had never existed. She felt herself richly rewarded for whatever had been thrust upon her, which seemed hard to bear, and would readily have undertaken a much more hazardous enterprise than her long terrible journey, to have secured but half the priceless satisfaction that she now possessed. She was assured her dear and honored father did not regard her as one unmindful of his love: nay, there was a most flattering conviction she had that share in his heart she had so long coveted. With such impressions, she thought no evil could touch her—no pain annoy her—neither vexation, nor sorrow, nor doubt, nor fear, trouble her under any circumstances.

But the so late unhappy father, how took he the gaining of this incomparable pleasing knowledge? As a bird escaping an unwholesome cage to the grandsome freedom of the invigorating air. He experienced feelings to which he had long been a stranger, and his breast became lightened of a most weary load. He made his fond and dutiful daughter tell over and over again all her various adventures, from the com-

mencement of her brave journey up to the present hour ; and much he marvelled, and greatly he praised, as he listened to her simple narrative.

The discovery that he had met with a heart truly devoted to him, that would, with a prodigality of affection akin to his own, pay him back his love with an interest that smacked largely of usury, was undoubtedly a wonderful blessing to him. Its effect on his health savored of a miracle. He gained strength and spirits so fast, that the happy change was visible to the dullest eye ; and of the numbers who hailed it with genuine pleasure, it was evident in none so strongly as in the doating Susanna, the attentive John Hall, and the faithful Simon Stockfish. Of the two latter, the young physician was looked on as one, for his absolute painstaking, deserving especial gratitude, and this be sure was shown him in exceeding liberal measure ; whilst his attached follower, from that time, was regarded by him as certain a fixture in his household as the most stable thing in it.

It chanced, however, ere he was scarce well recovered of his sickness, that he had another subject presented to his thoughts, to which they seemed to cling with a prodigious powerful hold, and this was caused by his receiving, in a close and mysterious manner, the following letter :

" By a trusty intelligencer, I heard of your lamentable sickness, and have since learned, with singular satisfaction, of your assured recovery. This I am desirous of hastening and securing as much as possible, and with such a view I bid you prepare to take the charge on yourself already mentioned to you. W. H. is a youth of quick parts, and is kindly disposed to all whom he believes mean well towards him ; yet in his disposition so unstable, he requires constant directing to prevent him going greatly astray whenever he may think he finds proper example for it. All is ordered for your and his sufficient accommodation. Methinks I need not commend him to you. I feel well assured you are prepared to satisfy me in all things relating to him, to yourself, and to me. Make then what despatch you can in your own affairs, so as, with only such slight delay as cannot be helped, you may be able to transport yourself to where the pure bright atmosphere of Italian skies is like to afford you the health and strength most urgently desired by your well-wishers ; among whom not the least sincere, let there be ranked,

" Your fast friend, and her own enemy."

Master Shakspeare pondered on the contents of this long and deeply. It stirred a current of feeling, which, though carefully hid from all observance, was the strongest in his nature. Powerful as it was, it was wonderfully sweet and delectable ; a sort of delicate intoxication, as it were, that excited the senses into a wild, ecstatic delirium, that thrust aside all common matters of life as unworthy of any account. That he most passionately, and with a wondrous earnestness of devotion, loved the fair writer of this letter, there can be no denying ; it was scarce in the ordinary nature of things that he could avoid this, considering how singularly choice a pattern she was of all womanly excellence ; admirable in form, and more admirable than all in the exquisite worthiness of her heart ; and this matchless combination of rare qualities had regarded the intellectual graces of his exalted character under circumstances that appealed most irresistibly to her sympathies, and had showed her appreciation of him in a manner too flattering not to touch the heart of one so exceedingly sensitive of kindly offices.

This love, be it remembered, must not be classed with the selfish passion which usually goeth by that name. Here, in both parties, it was the better impulses of deep feeling, exalted by the constant operation of high intellect. It was an adoration or soul worship, wherein the moral and intelligent being was wondrous powerfully operated upon by a like intensity of the moral and intellectual quality in another. I will not say that physical beauty had no hand in it, for where it exists it cannot help but make its due impression on the nature prepared to receive it ; but as the channel through which its impressions were conveyed was completely under the influence of the mind and heart, each acting upon the other, it standeth to reason that whatever was physical got so idealised and moralised in its course as to be regarded only in its best and most ennobling aspect.

Master Shakspeare loved this noble lady then after the same fashion that singular choice poet, Petrarch, loved his inestimable sweet mistress, the Lady Laura. He loved her, as it is familiarly said, with all his heart—and, an excellent addition, with all his mind also. There is no manner of doubt this was a marvellous sun. But he loved not her alone ; he loved whatever belonged to her with a like prodigal extravagance, and this his promised intimacy with W. H. seemed particularly to call forth his loving feelings. Nevertheless, though he might

indulge in private to what extent he pleased in this his fond devotion, he knew, before the public eye, he must be intent on nothing so much as showing his indifference, and therefore he sought to school his affections with a severity such as the absoluteness of the occasion called for.

On the perusal of the foregoing communication, his thoughts took an excursive flight—rising high in that elevated region where whatever is pure and noble is readily found, and floating long among the crowd of great and worthy images that properly belong to it. His present mood was one admirably adapted for the ready creation of those thoughts and feelings which are called and considered poetry; which, with one whose whole being was constituted of this choice quality, cannot seem singular: thereupon he suddenly took pen in hand, and presently wrote down the following succession of verses.

THE LOVER TURNED MERCHANT.

I.

The thriving merchant, moved by former gains,
Doth readily his venturous trade increase,
Taking such wondrous pleasure in his pains,
As though his good fortune was ne'er to cease.
Day after day doth find him grow more bold—
He sends out merchandise of ev'ry sort,
And sees his ships, heavy with silk and gold,
Amber and gems, float proudly into port.
He adds, he doubles, trebles ev'ry chance,
And doubled, trebled, every chance returns;
At last, his huge wealth hugely to enhance,
He ventures all his store: this Fortune
spurns,
Scatt'ring it to the winds in divers ways,
And leaving him a bankrupt all his days.

II.

I fear me much my goods I do embark
In traffic no less hazardous and blind,
Albeit though pounds at least for ev'ry mark
I in my ventures rarely fail to find.
And by such profit have I been led on
To make my chances greater than before,
Whilst tears that held me back at first are gone,
And I am thrust on risking more and more.
Within my warehouse, all in swelling piles,
My stores are garner'd, making a fair show;
That proveth how man fares when Fortune
smiles,
And what vast increase her adventurers
know.
Yet am I not content—a sumless gain
Tempts me to risk the heaps which there remain.

III.

At first I sent forth but an humble freight,
Of admiration void of flatt'ring gloss;
And in the venture my ambition's height
Was but to be secured from heavy loss.
When proper time elapsed, my ship came in
With a fair cargo of sincere esteem,
Which so well paid me, I was moved to win
More large returns with what should worthier
seem.
Straightway I fell to gathering what I had
Of courteous sentiment and gallant speech,
Then put them forth, and, with a heart right
glad,
Gained kindly thoughts in rich return for
each,
Next on my gladdened feelings I laid hand,
And found, well pleased, they were in good de-
mand.

IV.

My traffic flourished—and, now bolder grown,
I ventured on a precious store of hope;
The which, in sooth, I ne'er had called mine
own,
Had not my ends attained so wide a scope.
I scarce was sure my good ship held her course,
When I had notice she was coming back,
So richly laden, merchants on the Bourse
Might deem her of the seas the Queen Car-
rack.

Thus bountifully gifted, an invoice

I then made out—"Item. A rare supply
Of strong affections, very pure and choice."
Wherewith my ships sailed onward gallantly.
They owned when next they to their anchorage
drew,
The treasures of the old world and the new!

V.

Is this similitude too finely drawn?
Smacks it not roundly of the poet's dream?
Nay, 'tis so true, I'd put my heart in pawn,
I've done scant justice to the worthy theme.
For what, in honesty, can poor words do
The profit I have lit on to express?
What bravest speech sufficiently make true
The prodigal source which gave to such ex-
cess?
Ah, my heart's queen! but little reck the crowd
The heaped abundance of all goodly things,
Which in thy matchless nature stands avowed,
Which from thy bounteous heart uncounted
springs;
E'en the blest few to whom thou dost come
forth,
Have not intelligence of half thy worth.

VI.

I speak not of the crisped gold that waves
Its glorious treasure o'er thy noble brow;
Or of the pearls lodged in their coral caves,
Whose sailing glimpses glad me even now;

Nor speak I of those gems of sumless price,
Worthy the proudest spot in Heav'n's blue
zone,
That, without foil or other artifice,
Can dim the lustre of the rarest stone.
I look not to the sun that untold lies
In ev'ry curve of thy fair arm and hand ;
The African might gaze with wild surprise
To see such store of ivory in the land—
For with such costly gifts doth Nature grace
Those in her court who hold the highest place.

VII.

'Tis not of outward bravery I speak,—
That doth not enter into this account ;
For the most rounded bust or rosy cheek,
Which e'er hath made the eager blood to
mount
In the wrapt lover's veins, must in its time
Be turned to dust. There doth exist
A beauty boasting a perpetual prime,
That the Destroyer's sythe hath ever missed.
Age lays no wrinkle on its fair aspect,
Its sweet complexion ne'er was known to
fade,
It steals no grace from gauds wherewith 'tis
decked ;
From cunning art it never looks for aid.
This quality, of such great eminence,
Hath for its name and title " EXCELLENCE."

VIII.

Herein we find a wondrous aggregate
Of every gift that clothes humanity ;
Where noblest hopes and kindest wishes wait
Where charitable thoughts are standing by.
There VIRTUE prospers — there in worthiest
guise,
HONOR with stately mien doth glance around ;
There PITY seeks to dry her tearful eyes,
And MODESTY looks blushing to the ground ;
There sits RELIGION with a brow serene,
And calm-eyed JUSTICE eloquently grave,
Whilst meek OBEDIENCE so rarely seen,
With TEMPERANCE a quiet nook doth crave.
And breathing round a soul-entrancing thrall,
LOVE, with a regal power, ennobles all.

IX.

Such is the marvellous goodness of her heart !
But of her mind—snatch from a seraph's
wing,
A quill, and—fashioned by the scholar's art—
Dip it in truth's most delectable spring :
Where should we find a tablet large enough
To hold its worthiness—save Heav'n itself ?
(Forced though I be to put it in the rough,
I'll lodge the abstract on my heart's first
shelf.)
There WIT on honest fellowship is bent,
And LEARNING reaps where most are feign
to lease ;

There THOUGHT is great with child of Good
Intent,
Where WISDOM, the grave mid-wife, takes
her ease.
There JUDGMENT, FANCY, TASTE, and GENIUS
dwell,
And do become their lodging passing well.

X.

In traffic like the merchant Prince of ola,
A very Crœsus in her treasury,
Hath she not funds to pay a thousand fold,
For whatsoever I would have her buy ?
Ay, with such gen'rous spirit doth she trade,
It seems you cannot greatly sink your store ;
And with the wondrous profit I have made
I well may hope to better me still more.
Like a successful gambler do I pause,
Exulting in my winnings. " On ! still on !
Once more be swayed by Fortune's crooked
laws,
Great gains remain — all comes or all is
gone !"
Shall I seek ruin, in th' increase I crave,
Or rest me now, content with what I have ?

XI.

Down, ye insatiate longings ! Hence, avaunt
All covetous influences ! In vain
With eager restless impulses ye haunt
The secret chambers of my heart and brain !
Have I not gained a gracious competence
In this adventurous barter of the soul ?
And shall I do my worth such huge offence,
When blessed with part, to hunger for the
whole ?
Nay, let such selfish ends be thrust aside,
As very mire that muddles the pure fount.
We have sufficiently the traffic tried—
Let us, like honest merchants, close th' ac-
count ;
And should there be a balance small or large,
Let each to the other grant a full discharge.

XII.

But think not, bounteous spirit, I withdraw
From thy fond dealings, here to make an end :
Conscience, a sworn accountant, learn'd in law,
Is in this matter pleased to stand my friend :
And sheweth me a way where without ill
I can my grateful feelings cultivate ;
Whereof to take advantage is my will,
And shall my study be, early and late.
Trust me, that ne'er her damp, decay, nor moth,
Shall ever touch my precious merchandize ;
Nor shall there be a sign of ease, or sloth
In my behavior when this change shall rise.
I shall have constant use for all my store,
And in its care be busier than before.

XIII.

Then farewell, honorablest of all thy kind,
Epitome of Heav'n, for earth to grace !

Farewell, thou trusty heart—thou noble mind,
Thou exquisite in nature as in face!
Farewell the bounteous hand, whose princely
aims,
Were not more fair than is its dazzling hue;
Farewell the seraph tongue, whose music claims
More soul-subduing power than Orpheus
knew.
Oh, what a sum of sweetest womanhood
Makes the grand total of thy worthiness!
How vast a heap of all things great and good
Doth in thine excellence upon me press!
Blessings, and happiness too great to tell,
Be ever in thy path—Farewell! Farewell!

CHAPTER XX.

Such is her beauty as no arts
Have enriched with borrowed grace;
Her high birth no pride imparts,
For she blushes in her place.
Folly boasts a glorious blood—
She is noblest, being good.

HABINGTON.

MASTER SHAKSPEARE had by this got so far towards recovery as to be able to resume his ordinary duties and employments; and, being busy in the bringing out of the new play at "The Globe," his mind had no time to dwell upon any troublesome matter like to disturb his peace. He had many very liberal arrangements for the comfort of those of his family remaining at Shottery, the knowledge whereof doubtless gave him great contentation; but the gentle and faithful Susanna still abode with him, one cause of which was, that he had grown so attached to her, he delayed parting with her till the last moment; and another was, he knew not for the best how to dispose of her during his travels, for he doubted she would live in any sort of comfort if she returned to the cottage, and he was undecided where else she could be placed with satisfaction to herself and him.

The subject of the new play he had taken from Scottish story, in compliment to the Scottish king, his own sovereign; and he was earnest to have it brought out with as little delay as might be, as the time was fast approaching when he was to leave England, in charge of one of whom he could never think without emotions of the tenderest sort. It was now complete, and ready for the players; but, before he gave it for performance, he must needs try if it wanted not any finishing touches, and he did so after this fashion:—He sat in his chair in a

thoughtful attitude, with Susanna over-against him, reading aloud from his MS. She, pleased to be so employed, went through her task very lovingly, and, with a sweet, womanly voice, did give such melody to the vigorous lines, that the author felt himself much better content with his work than he had before been, and greatly did he marvel at the excellent rare judgment and taste displayed by the reader, as she entered into the spirit of that especial masterpiece of the writer's genius.

Of a surety, it made a most admirable, loving picture the father and daughter so employed, set off, as their figures were, by their brave apparelling, and surrounded by the picturesque furniture of the chamber in which they sat; and the understanding spectator, had he seen, could not have failed to have noticed how much the pleased excitement in the reader, and the gratified pride in the listener, did add to the expression of their noble countenances. Susanna had scarce finished her task, whieh, in secret she thought much too soon—an opinion shared by her delighted parent—when Sir George Carew entered, and, after saluting the blushing Susanna, with an air a much younger gallant might have envied, and cordially congratulating his friend on his greatly improved looks, he at once opened on his errand. This was no other than to inform his old acquaintance that he had been appointed ambassador to the court of France—whereupon he received congratulations no less hearty than awhile since he had bestowed. He went on to say he had a project in his mind, which not only himself but Lady Carew had set her heart on, that Master Shakspeare could alone effectually help him to. On hearing this, the other lost no time in assuring him his poor services were ever at his disposal, and that he should be infinitely glad to be a means for securing him and his sweet lady their several desires.

On this assurance, Sir George proceeded to state that he had thought very much of late of "his dear mistress"—as he styled his friend's daughter—and that the sorrow of parting with one he affected so deeply was so great he could by no means be brought to endure it, and that it did seem an especial hard case that so true and well-disposed a servant as was he should be debarred the exquisite sweet content he had been used to find in his dear miss-tress's delectable company—indeed it was altogether intolerable, and not to be borne—so that, after much debate on the matter with Lady Carew, it had been decided that the latter should in-

vite his dear mistress to accompany her to Paris, where it was earnestly desired she might be allowed to stay under her honorable guardianship, whilst the worthy gentleman, her father, proceeded on his travels till he reached Paris on his return home.

During this sportive speech, which wanted no grace the courtier could bestow upon it, was in course of utterance, Susanna turned a rosy red, and her eyes did flash very prettily, as much at the conceit of it, as at the exceeding pleasant prospect it opened; and her father could not conceal the extent of his satisfaction—for the proposal was what he had never dared to hope for—it was such an unlooked-for honor; yet nothing could have come so seasonably, seeing that he had been at a loss, for some time past, to dispose of her during his absence from England. Therefore, with a heart-felt thankfulness for so agreeable a proof of his consideration, he gladly agreed to such a disposition of his faithful Susanna, and soon got her to express her contention at it, though she did so with that diffidence the nature and extent of the obligation could not fail of creating.

After this, in an excellent, pleasant humor, the two friends fell to discussing the state of the French king, Henry the Fourth's court, and Sir George promised both his companions he would take care they should both have a proper knowledge of it, of the gallant Henri Quatre, of the stately Marie de Medicis, of the grave and politic De Rosni, and of all the other notable characters there to be found.

"But," said he, in his own cheerful humor, "'tis of another Henry you must now think of making the acquaintance, who bids fair to rival the French king in all his more sterling qualities." Then, seeing the other looked puzzled, he added, "I speak of our promising young Prince of Wales, than whom a more honorable, noble nature never breathed in this world; and for the proper qualities of a gentleman, as to learning, carriage, and the use of arms, I know not where to find his peer. In some discourse with him I had yesterday at Hampton Court, where he is staying, he chanced to make an allusion to yourself, and, being of a marvellous inquiring mind, put to me a vast number of questions concerning you and your writings, of which he appeareth to have a fair knowledge. I answered him in such sort, acquainting him with your intended journey, that he commanded me to bring you to him without fail this morning; therefore you must e'en surrender yourself at once, and away with you to Hampton Court,

for which journey I have taken care to provide horses ready for our riding."

Master Shakspeare expressed his willingness to be gone on the instant; and, after making certain arrangements regarding his now play the necessity of its speedy performance required, he left the house, accompanied by his assured friend, but not till the latter had made many gallant speeches to the fair Susanna, with a devotedness worthy of the perfectest example of knighthood in the most chivalrous times; and in a little while they were both riding together in the direction of Hampton Court, followed at a respectful distance by several mounted serving-men of Sir George Carew's, in their coats and badges.

"I hugely mislike the complexion of this trial of my right noble friend, Sir Walter Raleigh," observed Master Shakspeare in a confidential tone. "I am assured he is much too wise a man to have been guilty of the practices attributed to him, and his unworthy associate the Lord Cobham. I have heard from a trusty intelligencer that Cecil poisoned the king's ear against him before his coming to the throne, out of jealousy of his greater virtues and talents; and, having completely abused the king's mind, so that he could not endure the sight of him, notwithstanding his surpassing excellency, both as a soldier and a scholar, more securely to get rid of him, he devised this incredible charge of treason, and had him sent to the Tower, where he now is a close prisoner."

"I know not how this may be, Will," said Sir George, somewhat reservedly; "but this I do know, that if any of Cecil's spies be abroad, who are said to hear every thing, you stand an exceeding fair chance of sharing his imprisonment for what you have just said; and, indeed, if you escape being cast for a traitor, you will be in better fortune than many others in a like condition."

"Doubtless," replied his friend. "Yet there is warrant for my safety that I am not a rival, or am like to be one. In sooth, to tell you my exact sentiments, I like not much that has been done at court of late."

"Neither do I, Will," said the other, in a like confidential manner. "And in all honesty I have sought this appointment, that I might not continually see what I cannot but disapprove."

"I would have sworn as much," observed Master Shakspeare; then, after a pause, asked:—"Holds the king still to his minion Carr?"

"Ay, with fonder conceit than ever," an-

swered he. "This shallow popinjay not only hath no one merit to entitle him to be preferred over the heads of the bravest and best that seek the king's service, but he hath a marvellous ill reputation, that is like to dishonor all with whom he may chance to get connected."

"And our sweet young prince, how takes he such undue preference?"

"He is too deeply intent upon his various studies to heed greatly what is going on around him; nevertheless, his carelessness in this matter is not like to do him any sort of service where it should be most effective."

"How so, Sir George?"

"Truly, after this fashion, Will. He is already gaining to him the general voices, for which his many admirable sweet qualities are sufficient warrant, and not without some comparisons in no way pleasing to the principal subject of them. Now a displeasure so created will greedily be taken advantage of by those who feel assured they can make their advantage of it, and I fear me much he will hardly escape some terrible mischief, however discreet may be his carriage."

"Like enough. But Heaven preserve our fair young prince from all such evils!"

"Amen, with all my heart, Will!"

By this time they had rode so far, all the beauties of the country were fairly displayed before them, and greatly it delighted both travellers to see the farms which lay on every side, with here and there a windmill, a group of hay stacks, and a goodly mansion, till they came to the villages on their way. They beheld much which excited their observation in the groups they passed, which were of singular variety, from persons of the highest authority and worship, going or returning from the court, with such speed and state as bespoke the greatness of their business, to those of the humblest calling, who trudged quietly along, with a perfect indifference of all their prouder wayfarers evidently held in such huge estimation; and much was said by them of very excellent purport; but, when they had reached the neighborhood of Hampton, and saw spread before them, as in a picture, the lively beauties of all that part of the pleasant county of Surrey, though each had beheld them scores of times before, they frequently stopped their horses the better to admire them, and warm were the commendations both expressed.

Nor did the magnificence of the building they were approaching escape without a due share of admiration, and before they

entered its walls many a pleasant anecdote and many an interesting history had been told of the gay doings they had witnessed from the stately days of Cardinal Wolsey, to a date much nearer their own experience. And thus it was Master Shakspeare made himself so singularly well liked wherever he went, either affording entertainment from the bounteous stores of his own mind, or eliciting it by judicious questioning from such as could dispense it, yet lacked inclination, that his company was ever eagerly sought after by any who had once enjoyed the opportunity of knowing how profitable it was.

In the courtyard were men waiting with horses, dogs, hawks, statues, pictures, books, armor, and weapons, and divers other things, hoping to find a purchaser in their liberal young prince.

After giving their horses to the grooms, they advanced into the house together, un-checked by the porters and guards standing with their halberts about the entrance, whose duty it was to see none had admission who came not by proper authority, for this especial reason—Sir George Carew, being so well known there, any gentleman in his company would be sure to pass unquestioned. But, on their reaching the reception-room, Sir George was speedily accosted by one of the grooms of the chamber, who, on hearing the other's errand, courteously bade him wait with his friend amongst the company, with which the place seemed well crowded, whilst he went to acquaint the Prince of Wales of his coming.

"Surely, that is my Lady Countess of Essex?" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, as they stood together, where they could have a good view of the company.

"My Lady Countess that *was*, Will," whispered his friend. "She hath succeeded, Heaven only knoweth by what arts, in getting a divorce from her husband, on whom, as I am credibly informed, by devilish practices, she hath infamously imposed ever since they married."

"I have heard the like," answered Master Shakspeare; "in especial of her dealings for charms and drugs, by the help of which she might effect her horrible purpose. Yet to look at her, as she stands there so bravely appareled, dealing out to the gallants around her such delectable smiles, one cannot but doubt that she could be guilty of such thorough infamy. She hath an angel's shape."

"And a devil's heart—if one half of what is bruited abroad be true," added Sir George.

"It hath been confidently said," observed his companion, "yet I know not on what grounds, that the prince is enamored of her, and that she favors him."

"That the prince liketh her passing well I have seen enough to think probable, and that she is disposed to return the liking with unlawful interest I cannot doubt, but I question there is such attachment between them as is like to be lasting; for, in the first place, his Highness hath no more knowledge of her, than her woman's grace and woman's wit hath bestowed upon him; and I have that good opinion of his regard for honesty, I am in hopes, when he discovers what a terrible cockatrice she is, he will speedily be quit of her, and in the second place, I have good reason for believing that she hath cast her eye on the king's favorite—nay, I have been assured that he hath got himself made Earl of Rochester at her instigation, and that it is his intention to marry her forthwith."

"It is at least a marvellous fit and proper match," said Master Shakspeare, jestingly; "never were two people so well assorted. Their tastes are so equally abominable and abhorrent, there can surely be no falling out betwixt them; and their reputations are so wondrous alike in baseness, it is clean impossible they should ever take to calling each other names."

Sir George Carew laughed heartily at this conceit, which brought to them a courtier of his acquaintance, who would needs know the cause of his mirth; which the other, not being willing to tell, very gravely laid it to some cause so trivial and ridiculous, a child would scarce have taken it for a jest; nevertheless, the courtier laughed famously, and, satisfied he had been told an exceeding good thing, went, to the infinite satisfaction of his present company, to repeat it to divers of his friends there present. Master Shakspeare and his companion, after this, continued their remarks on certain of the persons who thronged the chamber, occasionally interrupted by such as they had knowledge of, who were not disposed to pass them without a courteous recognition.

The company was of a mixed sort: gallant ladies, each ambitious to monopolise the young prince's smiles—with the most powerful of the great nobles of the state, anxious to testify their respect to the heir to the throne; divines and lawyers, elbowing each other in the hope of gaining the attention of their prince to certain ponderous tomes of their inditing; whilst poets and playwrights trod on their heels, ready to tear each other to pieces to be first in get-

ting his Highness to accept their high-flown dedications to their labored trifles. Then came scores of commanders and captains, no less eager of the prince's countenance of their merit; whilst ingenious mechanics came with their inventions and contrivances, that, in their opinions at the least, were marvels, such as the world had never seen before. With these came jockeys to brag of their horses; virtuosos, to put off their pictures and statues; musicians, matchless in the practice of their art; possessors of choice dogs and hawks; armorers, painters, players, famous swordsmen, and gunners unrivalled any where in the world.

They were employed in this way, when a stately gentleman, with a serious aspect, yet gracious manner, came up and accosted Sir George Carew with a friendliness that showed they were of old acquaintance, after which the latter introduced him to his friend as Sir Thomas Chaloner, the prince's chamberlain; and he having stated that he had been sent by his Highness to bring Master Shakspeare and Sir George Carew to him, they immediately proceeded with him to the chamber, where the prince awaited them. This they found to partake much of the character of a museum of arms and other warlike matters, with a few things of a more peaceful sort. There were ranged round the room sundry sorts of armor, of curious fabric, confusedly dispersed with all manner of weapons—models of ships, boats, and pieces of ordnance stood upon the tables, with a crowd of books and pamphlets—whilst in other places were many ingenious instruments, with globes, maps, and the like objects of philosophical study.

When Sir Thomas Chaloner entered, announcing his companions, they beheld a youth of grave and studious aspect, earnestly attending to the explanation of a plain seafaring sort of man, who was describing the various parts of the model of a fine ship before them. He was not dressed with such grandeur as would denote his dignity, yet there was that princely air with him, a stranger would have been at no loss to give him his right title. At a distance was one in the habit of a priest, with a mild expression of countenance that greatly became his calling, who appeared to be regarding the young Prince with an unusual deep interest. This was his secretary and tutor, Master Adam Newton.

Prince Henry received the homage of his visitors with a very Prince-like courtesy, noticing of Master Shakspeare, as it seemed, with singular curiousness, the which

was returned by its object, coupled with a feeling of the purest gratification; and, after the first few proper speeches had passed, his Highness addressed him, as though he was his assured friend and counsellor.

"I hear you are about venturing on a long journey" said he, "for that you are going to travel as governor to my Lord of Pembroke's heir, to show him whatsoever things are worthy of note in other countries."

Master Shakspeare briefly answered that he was about taking upon himself such an office.

"Surely, my Lord of Pembroke hath singular good fortune!" he exclaimed. "Methinks, it is rare for any one, let him be as rich as he please, to secure for his son in such a case a person so like to do honor to his judgment, and justice to his son's good qualities." The compliment was gracefully and gratefully acknowledged.

"I have read several of your works Master Shakspeare," added the Prince, "and have seen others represented by mine own players; and believe me I am exceeding taken with them." Here the well pleased author could do no less than bow very reverently at being so commended by his Prince. "There are passages which methinks can never be read or repeated too often, that will bear no addition to their very exquisite sweet beauty, and from which nothing can be taken without irreparable loss." Master Shakspeare again testified his sense of the honor of such praise. "I have long wished to have speech with you, having received such excellent profit from all that you have writ; and, hearing of your speedy departure, I begged of my greatly esteemed friend, Sir George Carew, that he would manage so that I should see you before you sailed. I feel infinitely thankful to him he hath so readily accomplished my wishes."

At this Sir George said how heartily glad he was, at all times, to serve so gracious a prince, but more especially in this instance, when his office was to bring before His Highness's attention an honorable gentleman, whose qualities of mind and heart were of such a sort, he felt it a distinction to be of his acquaintance. Thereupon Master Shakspeare thought himself bound to acknowledge, more at length than he had before done, the honor he had received; and he spoke to such good purpose, and with such force of language, the prince seemed to listen with a visage that plainly expressed his satisfaction. He then inquired concerning his route; and on learn-

ing the cities in Italy he intended visiting, he turned to his secretary, and bade him write such and such letters to the king his father's ambassadors in those places, to be sent to Master Shakspeare's lodging with all proper speed. Then, learning he was to pass through France, he promised he would write a letter in his own hand, to his excellent good friend the French king, as well to recommend unto His Majesty a person of such note as Master Shakspeare, as to thank him for certain presents of armor and arms Henri Quatre had lately presented him with.

These he presently showed his visitors, and got Sir George Carew, whose intimate knowledge of such things he seemed to take into great account, to give his opinion of them, after which he spoke of certain horses he had got fit for the great saddle, and exhibited, in various ways, the interest he took in every thing of a warlike character, particularly dwelling on the model he had been so intent on of a certain ship that was to be built for him under the direction of that approved shipwright, Phineas Pett, who, on their entering, had been explaining to him many interesting particulars relating to it, and speaking of a number of other subjects with such vivacity of tongue and extent of knowledge, that his hearers were as much gratified by his speech as they were charmed by his courtesy.

On their moving to depart, the prince again spoke very earnestly of the marvellous sweet pleasure he had had from the productions of Master Shakespeare; so handsomely alluded to the entertainment he looked forward to on his return from travel, from new efforts of his fantasy, and in his deportment so kindly carried himself towards him and his friend, that it seemed as though neither could find language sufficiently strong to express their contentation. Sir Thomas Chaloner accompanied them, and to him they mentioned the pride they felt in their good fortune, in having a prince so worthy to reign over them; upon which the worthy chamberlain, who was so well pleased to hear as they were to speak his praises, gave them many choice anecdotes of the like behavior of his, at which they found excellent entertainment.

They were pushing their way through the crowd, waiting the prince's appearance, when they were struck with the stir that was made at the other end of the chamber, and soon they heard the cry spread of "The King! the king!"

"King James is returning from hunting," said the chamberlain; "and if he

cometh back in no better humor than he went, I would as lief hang as ask him a favor."

"Hath any thing in particular put him out?" asked Master Shakspeare.

"Ay, something exceeding particular," answered he.

"Carr hath got the tooth-ache, perchance?" inquired Sir George, with an affectation of gravity he was far from feeling.

"No, by this light it is scarce so bad as that," said Sir Thomas, laughingly. "But touching this new-made Earl of Rochester, for I hear the patent of his nobility is already made out, high as he holds himself, and secure as he thinks himself, methinks his fall shall not be very far distant."

"How so, pray you?" asked both, earnestly.

"See you that handsome youth, in the satin doublet, curiously embroidered?" demanded the Prince's chamberlain.

"A well-limbed youth, by this hand! and of a very excellent aspect," said Master Shakspeare. "Of what name and rank is he?"

"His name is Villiers," answered Sir Thomas; "and the graces of his manners are not more conspicuous than those of his person. Now King James hath more than once been seen to cast an admiring eye on his delicate figure; and those who know him best say it waiteth only some slight difference to spring up betwixt Carr and his patron for Villiers to step in and be preferred at once."

"But what was it, I pray you, Master Chamberlain, that hath so discomposed His Majesty, as you said but now?" said Master Shakspeare.

"Marry, matter enough, of all conscience," answered he. "Some one, more blessed with tongue than brains, hath, in his place in parliament, so roundly abused Scotland and the whole Scottish nation, that every one of that honest people, from the king to the lowest beggar among his liege subjects, look upon it as an intolerable affront. His Majesty, in especial, is in horrible disdain; and, if the orator succeed in keeping his ears, he will have better fortune than some predict for him."

Here the approach of King James, and the bustle it created, put an end to the dialogue. He approached in a hunting-habit, with as little of the trappings of royalty as of its demeanor, wearing a dull, stolid countenance, marked by no pleasing lineaments, and exhibiting a form possessing as little pretensions of kingly state as to manly grace. Near him were several of the courtiers, who

had been his companions in the chase, looking tired and heated, and not a whit better pleased than their master, for they had all had ill success. All at once, as the king was advancing through the crowd, who respectfully made way for him, a well-apparelled female, of noble appearance, rushed forward, and, with every sign of the deepest distress, threw herself at his feet. The king looked no less displeased than surprised; but he evidently knew not who she was, or what was her object.

"By this light, 'tis Dame Raleigh!" exclaimed Sir George Carew.

"Ay," added Sir Thomas Chaloner, "she hath come to sue his Majesty for the restoration of her husband's lands, which the king hath seized, considering them forfeited by Sir Walter's late abominable treason." It was no less than he had said. They could hear her imploring the king, in the most passionate, moving arguments woman's eloquent tongue ever uttered, not to strip her innocent children of their inheritance; but the monarch turned from the beautiful matron impatiently; and, with a severe aspect, and almost savage voice, cried out, "I maun ha' the land! I maun ha' it for Carr!" then hastily continued his progress.

Master Shakspeare smothered the execration that readily rose to his lips; and his companions, whatever their thoughts may have been, had too much experience of court-life to betray them; nevertheless, they also remained silent till it came to leave-taking. Such effect had the scene on him, that, for some time, he rode on in silence; and, though he entered into conversation with his friend during their return with his accustomed spirit, he did not shake off the feelings in had created till he found himself at the Globe, and was busily employed in making the requisite preparations for the immediate performance of his new play.

It is here only necessary to state, that this his very admirable and right-moving tragedy of *Macbeth*, so took with the public, that more complete success was never known; and when he beheld it thoroughly established with the audience, he took leave of his friends, and prepared himself for the immediate commencing of his travels.

CHAPTER XXI.

But wot you what? The young was going
To make an end of all his wooing;
The parson for him staid;
Yet by his leave, for all his haste,
He did not so much wish all past,
Perchance as did the maid.

SUCKLING.

MARVELLOUS was the stir in the cottage at Shottery, when it was discovered that Susanna had taken herself away from home, on the hazardous and difficult errand her affectionate, grateful heart had set her. The tongue of Aunt Prateapace wagged as though it was never to stop, to the infinite disparagement of her gentle niece. Aunt Gadabout lost no time in going hither and thither to pick up what information she could of the runaway, and returned with a budget of scandal, for which she found eager listeners; but, ere she had well got rid of it, these two came to words, which Aunt Breedbate did so encourage, that nothing was like unto the fierceness of their quarrel. Nevertheless, they agreed at least in this—that they had always been satisfied in their own minds she would come to no good: and then they glanced from her to her estimable worthy father, who, for the crime of encouraging her to quit her home in so horrible scandalous a fashion, was every thing most intolerably villainous and to be abhorred; and, for the shamefulness of his behavior to his wife, was all the brutes that ever went into Noah's Ark, with a commodity of monsters sufficient to supply a similar establishment.

Then they set to lamenting most pitifully how poor wives were horribly tyrannized over, and laid it down, as a well-ascertained fact, that husbands and wives were natural enemies, and that the latter being so abominably put upon, ought to look the sharper after their proper rights and privileges; the which, as it seemed, principally consisted in doing as they pleased, whether right or wrong, and deceiving and defrauding their tyrannical helpmates to the very best of their abilities. On this fruitful subject, it may be said to their credit, they spoke like unto those who practiced what they preached, and with an eloquence equally moving and edifying, until, as usual, something was said offensive to the other, which the third handled to such good purpose, that a bitter wrangle ensued more sharp and lasting than the one so lately concluded.

She, for whose pretended benefit they labored so assiduously, said little; in truth, she began to entertain misgivings she had

been led to act a good part; but such ideas were quickly driven from her by her mischievous kinswomen, and she was fain to rest under the exceeding consolation, that of all ill-used wives she was the most infamously abused. Her favorite daughter, Judith, however, was not to be so easily contented. Under the careful tutorings of her aunts, she had made such progress in what they took to be a woman's proper sense of her own worth, that she outrivalled each in her peculiar merit. She was as indifferent to the proper pleasures of home as Aunt Gadabout—as greedy of gossip as Aunt Prateapace—and, not only was as prone to strife as Aunt Breedbate, but showed her discontent of things by a shrewishness that had come to be the general talk of the whole county. Though it was a matter of doubt a young woman of a more enticing appearance could have been met with anywhere—for her form had now been moulded in that ripe and tempting perfectness for which her mother had been so famed at a like age, and the rich blooming beauty of her countenance was admirable to look on, at those rare times, when it was free from the marks of passion—yet the young men who knew her took such heed to avoid her, as though she were ugly as Hecate.

The simple truth was, several had already taken some pains to prove themselves her true lovers; but one having, as a choice proof of affection, got a broken pate, with a besom-handle from her own fair hand, for venturing to express an opinion of colors differing from her own, another, equally fortunate, escaping by a miracle, a martyrdom she intended him by casting a pasty, two wheaten loves, a neat's tongue, and a dish of pippins at his head, because, at dinner, she took offence at his arguing for brown meats whilst she was expressing her preference for white; and divers having been pretty nearly annihilated by the flashings of her dark eyes, and the torrent of searching words she poured upon them, for some small fault they had unwittingly committed that had provoked her violent temper, that all had resolved she was of so cursed a tongue, and so evilly disposed withal, they would have none of her. Therefore had she come to be carefully avoided of them all, as though she had the pestilence.

At home she was often as difficult to please as abroad, and had more than once, in scolding, proved herself a match for either of her aunts, proficient though they were in the art. But, though they had been taught to understand the force of her temper, never did it come upon them with so

sharp and pitiful a shower as after the discovery had been made of her sister's flight. On a sudden, she turned upon them, and so mauled them with her tongue, they were for a time clean dumbfounded with astonishment; nevertheless, they were too experienced in such warfare to be easily beaten, and were inwardly ashamed so young a hand should get the better of them, even for a moment; therefore they took to their weapons very briskly, in the hope of quickly silencing their rash antagonist. Thereupon ensued a terrible din, to which that confusion of tongues which existed at the building of the Tower of Babel was harmony in comparison. Judith, so far from being abashed at so overpowering an attack, did presently meet it with a countercharge so furious, it swept down all before her. In sooth, she raised such a hurricane of words, the three scolds were one and all fairly driven out of the field; and, after this, ever held their young kinswoman in especial respect, looking up to her with much the same sort of admiration men of war regard a famous commander.

The more grave among the burgesses of Stratford became at this time exceedingly disturbed by the wild pranks of a young kinsman, from London, of Malmsey, the vintner, who was called Dick Quiney. He not only spent his money prodigally in roysterling with divers his loose companions, to the scandal of the greybeards, but kept the whole town in continual ferment by some mad prank or another, which exceeded all things in audacity and recklessness the longest liver amongst them had ever heard of.

At one time he would cause an ass, dressed in the robes of the High Bailiff, to be found taking the bailiff's place in the Town Hall; at another, he would so change the signs that usually hung at the burgesses' doors, that every one had something as different as possible to what he had before, which oft had some satirical meaning in't, of which the witty rogues made rare sport. There was a bunch of grapes seen hanging over the parson's porch, and a fleece swung before the lawyer's; the apothecary's door boasted the sign used by the furnishers of funerals; and the baker's had that which belonged to the dealer in bones, chalk and the like stores. One who was known to have a scolding wife found his house decorated with the sign of the good woman—that is, a woman without a head; and another, who had shown himself deficient in courage, was similiarly pointed at by a board before his dwelling, representing a white hart. In brief, there was never a day

passed that did not bring forth some freak of his wanton wit at the expense of the more sober-minded of the community.

But though by some he was regarded as a scandal to the place, his free spirit and manly bearing made him a favorite with others. He affected neither fineness of dress nor of phrase, though his well knit limbs and comely visage would have right well become the one, and his ready wit might not have turned the other to bad account. And his readiness to join in any sport, as well as to create such sport as all those of his station were sure to flock to, made him well liked of many, among whom be sure were Tommy Hart and his merry partner, and their constant associate and good gossip, Jonas Tietape, who, by the way, was shrewdly suspected of assisting in most of the jests which young Quiney played upon the grave burgesses of Stratford. In the kitchen of the jovial hatter he was a frequent visiter; and there, often after the gay song and merry tale, many a famous scheme had been devised for the furnishing of good occasion for honest mirth.

One night they were altogether, as merry as so many crickets in a clover-field. The hatter and the vintner's nephew were playing at tables, with the good-humored Joan looking on, yet occasionally casting aside her eyes to watch the strange movements of Jonas, who was balancing himself on two chairs, and employing other strange antics, much to the diversion of herself and the players, both of whom, ever and anon, forgot their game to be spectators of his grotesque antics. There was no lack of converse amongst them, but it looked not to be of the very gravest import, if any judgment of it could be drawn from the mirth it excited. The chief source of this was the laughing dame, strongly recommending to the young bachelor beside her, certain honest maids of her acquaintance as wives, the whole of whom she knew to be as little to his taste as ugliness, shrewishness, age, or folly, could make them. At last, she seemed to fix upon her neice Judith, of whose exceeding gentleness, quietness, and pleasantness of temper, she expatiated so largely, out of the mischievousness of her spirit, that he looked to be greatly taken with the description, and swore lustily he would have her, come what would, for she was exactly what he wished to find in a wife. At this Tommy Hart turned his head on one side, and laughed in his sleeve.

Then the merry Joan went on to state what a blessed family he would unite himself to, particularly referring, with famous

imposing words, on the marvellous sweet disposure of her three ancient kinswomen:—how singularly homely a body was Aunt Gadabout—how reserved and prudent with her tongue was Aunt Prateapace—and how precious and notable a peacemaker was Aunt Breedbate. Thereupon young Quiney answered these were the very sort of persons he would most desire as relations. At hearing this, his merry host could contain himself no longer; and, after the hugeness of his mirth had somewhat abated, he undecived his companion as to the characters and dispositions of the damsel and her intolerable meddling, marring, mischief-making kinswomen. And all laughed at the jest that had so cleverly been played upon him. They very cordially congratulated him on his meeting a person so well fitted to secure his happiness, and assured him that, if his heart was really so set on having a shrew, he might be certain in Mistress Judith to have the most perfect example of shrewishness of which all Warwickshire could boast.

"Odds, cat o' mountains!" said he, very merrily. "Be she ever so savage, I will tame the shrew, I warrant you," and, out of bravado, would still continue in his humor of taking her to wife; and the tales he was told of the villainous manner she had behaved to her suitors only seemed to inflame him the more. He seemed to like the conceit of wooing such a tigress, and in this humor started the next morning for Shottery.

It so fortuned that Judith had that morning chose to remain at home whilst her mother went on some errand of revelry with Aunt Gadabout, and was sitting in the kitchen, earnestly engaged in spinning, when she was startled by a loud knocking at the outer door. Thinking it was some one of her acquaintance, she bade them enter, though in no gentle voice, for she was not in a mood to be disturbed; but this mood was in no way lessened, when she beheld enter a young fellow with a countenance and manner betaking of a careless impudency, negligently appareled, whom she knew slightly by sight, but more by report, as the wildest roysterer in Stratford. The cloud on her brow darkened ominously as he hailed her on his entrance in intolerable familiar language, and made to salute her with a huge profession of gallantry. She started up from her seat with no less indignation than amazement, for it was a marvellous thing for any man to offer to come near her, much less to address her after such a fashion.

"Away with thee, fellow!" exclaimed she, in a right angry pitch. "On what fool's errand hast thou come here? Get thee hence, on the instant, or by my halidome I'll crack thy crown for thee, thick as it is!"

"What exquisite music!" exclaimed young Quiney, in a seeming ecstasy. "I had the trees and rocks, that were so moved by the power of Orpheus, but have heard thy harmonious voice, they must needs have reeled again in the infinite sweet intoxication of its too absolute charm upon the senses. Permit me to claim a faithful servant's privilege——"

"Hands off, knave!" cried Judith, as she started back. "Nay, by the rood! this impiety exceedeth my poor patience. Prythee, have done with it straight, or I will give thee cause to repent it the rest of thy days."

"Deny me not, fair arbitress of my destiny!" continued he, putting himself into all manner of extravagant attitudes, in what looked to be the likeness of a courtly lover, only the homeliness of his garb made it seem infinitely ridiculous. "My heart is overburthened with the weight of my exceeding love for thee, which I can no longer contain in pining secrecy, as I have, O light of my life, for so long a time past."

"Thy heart and thee may go hang together," replied the damsel, sharply. "I need no such garbage. Thou wilt find, I tell thee, thou hast taken the wrong sow by the ear, an thou comest any thy fool's tricks upon me."

"The greatness of my passion must needs find vent, dear heart," persisted he. "Love hath such wondrous potency, nought can stay him in his fond career; and, having such food to feed on as thy exquisite beauty, and admirable sweet gentleness of nature, what marvel is it he should be uncontrollable, as in mine own case. Matchless example of woman's perfectness, I must needs do thee a pardonable violence——"

"Wouldst!" cried she in a fury, as she snatched up a rollingpin that was nigh at hand. "I'll pardon thee, i'faith!" And she aimed a blow at him which, had it taken effect, would have quenched the fire of his love had it burned ever so fiercely; but he caught her wrist ere she had time to use it, and, despite her struggles, not only deprived her of her weapon but inflicted the violence he had spoke of; uttering, all the whilst, such affectionate declarations as it seemed only could have been drawn from the most thoroughly enamored heart. She broke away from his caress, and, in a very monstrous passion, took to flinging at his head

with a prodigal store of abusive and contemptuous epithets, every sort of thing within her reach, that might do him a mischief; but he, by his quickness, succeeded in escaping all harm, and continuing in the same loving mood, again caught her in his arms, and took his revenge, malgre all her kickings, plungings, and cutlings, till he was content. It was terrible for her to be so foiled; so directly she could get away, her first effort was either by taking up some heavy weapon to fell him to the ground, or to drive him out of the place by means of a furious shower of missiles; but she had small profit of her pains, for he allowed nothing to touch him, and, watching his opportunity, soon succeeded in again taking the freedom which did so enrage her.

At last, thoroughly exhausted, and panting with her long and violent struggles, with a heated face, and disordered hair and dress, she threw herself into a chair. Seeing which, young Quiney sat himself familiarly on the table over-against her, and pursued the gallantry of his humor in his speech, as though nothing could ruffle him. Judith was so spent by her exertions, she could only get a few words out now and then, but their vivacity showed the greatness of her spirit was in no way diminished.

"Thou art an insolent knave! I doubt thy true errand is to rob the place."

"My true errand, sweet heart, is to woo thee."

"Woo me! Ere I will suffer myself to be wooed by such a scurvy rogue, I'll eat my fingers by way of breakfast."

"I will not only woo thee, sweetest, but wed thee; and that shortly."

"Nay, if thou dost, I will let thee call me a snipe. *I* marry such a lackfarthing—such a ruffian roysterer pickthank? Why thou hast no more credit than wit, and as little honesty as either! I would as lief marry the whipping-post, for it could not put me more in mind of all manner of knavishness and ill-dealing.

"Nevertheless, sweet Judith, be assured I will marry thee and none other; and I doubt not at all, out of the absolute affection thou dost kindly entertain for me——"

"*I* entertain affection for such a worthless, ill-behaved knave as thou art. I would right willingly give all I am worth in this world to see thee have thy deserts from the hands of the hangman."

"Thou wilt shorten the time of my wooing, so that I may take thee to church in as brief a space as may be possible."

Judith bitterly disclaimed any such intention; nevertheless, her lover continued

to sit with his heels dangling under the table, perseveringly insisting on the wondrous greatness of her love for him, and the necessity of their speedy marriage, and took no manner of heed of her interruptions. But whether it was it so chanced she could not help being influenced by such singular behavior, or, as she sat, had time to scan the handsome features and well-knit figure of her determined gallant, which was evident enough in spite of his rough, unhandsome garments, her abuse began perceptibly to be less violent.

At this time, her aunts Breedbate and Prateapace—who had hitherto been no farther off than the garden, yet were engaged in so violent a dispute they had heard nothing of what had been going on in the kitchen—entered, and no sooner did they spy young Quiney, sitting at his ease so furiously, than they took to calling him to task in the severest language they had at their commandment: during which he looked them quietly in the face, and whistled and drummed on the table with an excess of impudence that inflamed their rage the more. His mistress, who seldom missed an opportunity of defying her meddling kinswomen, was drawn more towards him by this opposition of theirs to him; yet she did not think proper to interfere in the matter.

Aunt Breedbate and aunt Prateapace now became quite furious, and in a torrent of villainous language bade the intruder begone, or they would tear his eyes out; at which he suddenly jumped down, and putting on a horrible fierce look, snatched up a spit that was hanging above the chimney, leveling it at them, shouted out in a most murderous voice:

"Ha! dost dare attempt such sacrilege as to disturb two happy lovers? Nay, then, I'll pin thee to the wall like a couple of cockchafer." But the sight of the point of the blade, presented in so formidable a manner, was enough for them, and ere you could count one, they turned tail and fled, shrieking like scalded pigs, into the garden, in their haste stumbling over each other as they got to the threshold.

Judith could not forbear laughing at the ridiculous fright the two old women were put into—but there were other laughers besides herself—for young Quiney's gossips, Jonas Tietape and Tommy Hart, had come to see how their friend fared in his wooing of the terrible shrew, and from the open door had been spectators of it from first to last. Jonas was so well pleased with the conceit of the cockchafers, that, whilst his companion

was enjoying his mirth, he commenced before the house a series of tumbles, with all his might, quite forgetful of a young terrier he had got in each pocket, who put out their heads, and yelped most lustily at being so strangely turned about.

Judith's lover now took his departure, yet with many famous speeches denoting the excess of his love, and the intolerable hardship of tearing himself away; but, the next day, after watching the absence of her mother and aunts, he again presented himself before her, and a like scene passed between them, with this difference, that she did not put herself in so tearing a passion, nor abuse him quite so scurvily as she had done the day before. The truth was, her mother and her aunts, hearing of his strange visit and its object, did declaim against him so fiercely, that, out of sheer opposition, as was her wont, she took up the cudgels in his defence, and swore very roundly he should marry her, an she liked it, come what would. Nevertheless, when he repeated his visit every day, assuming to himself the appearance of one who is greatly beloved, she was frequently exceeding sharp upon him; but his perseverance won so upon her, that at last, looking to be in a great rage, she promised she would marry him, that she might be the better able to punish him for his matchless impudence.

In this humor the wedding-day was soon fixed, but, when the neighbors came to hear of it, there seemed no end to their marvelling. To think that Judith should find a husband! They could scarce believe it possible; and that so reckless a fellow as Dick Quiney should have sought out a helpmate of Judith's villainous temper, so monstrous looked the union, they could hardly be brought to believe it. The matter though was settled: and every day the disinclination of the damsel to it became less and less evident; in truth, she could not but admire the spirit with which her lover pursued his object, and be amused with the extravagance of his professions in averring the prodigious extent of her affection for him. Ever and anon she broke out into sudden rages, but these latterly had come at longer intervals.

The wedding day approached, and she determined on carrying it with a high hand, bid all her friends to the ceremony, and got together as much finery as she could to grace the occasion. Some of her acquaintance affected to lament her so casting of herself away; but others—and these were such as had had most knowledge of her disposition—by this time had assured them-

selves this marriage promised to be a good riddance of her.

The wedding-day arrived, and the bride and all the company were assembled in their holiday suits, ready to go to church. Of the latter, whatever might have been their thoughts, their visages were as pleasant as though the match was one of their own contriving. They had been waiting some time, to the damsels infinite impatience, and yet no bridegroom had arrived. Judith began to chafe at this neglect, and her brow darkened, and her foot beat the ground. Still no bridegroom came. His absence began to be marked, and whispers went round, which the bride observed not without a marvellous increase to her former discontent. For a time she managed to comfort herself to some small extent, by imagining that in honor of her he had been making extraordinary preparations which delayed him, and in a brief while he would doubtless appear at the head of a gallant cavalcade, all in new suits, got ready expressly for the occasion. But, as time passed, and still there was no sign of him, she began to suspect he had no intention of marrying at all, and only cared to put her to this public shame.

The idea of it so galled her, that she was about bursting forth in a horrible tearing rage, to send every one sans ceremony about his business, when she heard the welcome intelligence of his coming. She took a hasty peep at the casement, to observe the brave fashion in which he had chosen to lead her to church, but words of mine cannot picture her dismay, indignation and shame, when she beheld him approaching on foot with hasty strides, not only in the old buff jerkin and slops, the soiled boots, and the worn beaver, she had ever seen on him, but so covered with dust from head to foot, he could scarce be recognized. Instead of the gallant company she expected with him, there followed close at his heels the well-known figure of Jonas Tietape, in a similar rude suit, making the most extravagant strides to keep pace with him, with the heads of two young water-dogs peeping out of his pockets, a long rusty sword at his side, and a pair of pistolets in his belt.

Without a word said, young Quiney strode through the astonished crowd assembled to do honor to his nuptials, and the woman's tailor quite as indifferently strode after him. The bridegroom stopped before the enraged and humiliated bride, and, malgre her black looks, accosted her with a familiarity in no way corresponding with the time, and in a voice all could hear, vowed he had been

playing at bowls, and had nigh forgotten his appointment; then, hastily turning to his trusty squire, who had assumed a very owl-like visage, he inquired whether he thought not bowls an exceeding pleasant pastime to while away a dull hour or so, to which the other answered, in a monstrous aggravating voice :—“ By goles, there was none such in his estimation, when he was of the winning side, and the tipple was good !”

The whole assembly looked thunderstruck, and the bride could not conceal her intense mortification, but time pressed so closely, it admitted of no remonstrance on her part; so, comforting her loving nature with the prospect of an ample revenge, she allowed herself to be led to church, her lover all the way behaving towards her as though he had done all that was best and fittest, and that she must needs be satisfied with him in every respect, and occasionally turning away from her to ask some question about the game he had been playing, of the woman’s tailor, who chose to walk in the procession a little way behind him. Judith felt disposed to have brained them both, so horribly indignant was she with the slights that had been put upon her, but she satisfied herself with nursing her wrath, and vowed all sorts of intolerable retaliations. As they came to the church-door, Quiney turned round, and reminded his companion the steeds would be wanted at such a time, to which the other answered :—“ The noble animals should be in attendance at his worship’s order.”

The ceremony proceeded, every one marvelling more and more at the strange behavior of the young bridegroom. Judith had fancied she had endured enough affronts; but, when the priest demanded “ who gave the maid away ?” and Jonas Tietape, puppy-dogs and all, gravely stepped forward to claim that office, she felt ready to sink into the earth with vexation; and at the termination of the ceremony she relished not a whit the more the rough, rude manner in which her husband, before all the people, gave her a salute which made the church ring again, and hailed her as Dame Quiney, after such boisterous fashion as might be seen only at the wedding of a tinker. She seemed overpowered with this villainous usage. No one congratulated her; for in truth, all were so wonderstruck they knew not what to do; and she proceeded back to the church-door in so discontented a state of mind, she had resolved, when she mounted on one of the “ noble steeds” she had heard would be pro-

vided to take her to her husband’s home, to ride away somewhere, she cared not whither, so that she escaped the base usage to which she had been subjected.

But, whatever had been her discontent hitherto, it increased to a pitch beyond all toleration when she beheld at the church door, a raw-boned, wind-galled, goose-rumped, wall-eyed animal, that seemed in age a very Methusalem among horses, which evidently by the pillion fastened upon him, was intended for her riding; and, by his side, was a half starved donkey—looking as miserable as though he had not a belly-full since the day he was foaled—which she supposed must be for her husband. At the very sight of these “ noble steeds” she held back, and, fearing she could have no better conveyance, she flatly refused to budge a foot to mount such wretched horseflesh.

In vain the bridegroom, with most persuasive gentleness, assured her that she could not reach his dwelling in any other way, and dilated on the matchless qualities of the horse, relating a pedigree boasting of the first blood of the kingdom. She vowed she would not be a laughing-stock to her friends, and stoutly determined no power on earth should make her mount so sorry a beast. At this, Quiney himself mounted the horse, all the whilst giving him as many flattering expressions as though he were an Arabian of the purest descent, and then made a sign to his gossip, the woman’s tailor. In a moment Judith found herself enclosed in two powerful arms, raised from the ground, and, in the next, despite her struggles and cries, placed on the pillion by the side of her husband. Having done this with singular dexterity, Jonas mounted the donkey, and, amid the laughs and shouts of the spectators, the three started off.

Finding in physical force, she was no match for him into whose hands she had fallen, she let loose her tongue, and did so bewail him with it, such a torrent of invective was surely never heard before; but he minded it not a jot, every now and then stopping in the tune he was whistling, to ask her, with a marvellous show of affliction, if she felt herself perfectly comfortable; or turning unconcernedly around to his trusty companion, to make some pleasant remark, which was sure to elicit a smart rejoinder, in the roughest tone voice ever had. Her surprise at this indifference became much lessened, when she discovered that her husband’s ears were so stuffed with cotton, doubtless for the occasion, that, had she rated him in ever so high a key, he could

have heard no more than one who was a thousand miles off. Finding scolding of no avail, she grew to be sulky, and would answer no questions; but, as her husband seemed careless whether she replied or not to what he said, she got but small satisfaction from her silence. All this time she was exceeding curious as to where she was going; but it did not appear she was like to have any information very speedily.

In a few hours they arrived at a desolate-looking cottage on the heath, far from any public road. She entered, and the unpromising outside was not a foretoken of the want of comfort within. Indeed it did so lack all proper accommodation, that, forgetting her late humor of sulkiness, and the small likelihood there was of her talking to any profit, she once more burst out into the most overwhelming reproaches and abuse, till she remembered how idle was all matter of speech; then, breaking forth in a rage to be so foiled and unhandsonely used, she began to scatter and destroy everything that was within her reach. Much did she marvel to find her husband, instead of checking her as she expected, not only encouraging her by his voice, but assisting her in the work of destruction, and with such extraordinary fury, that, in a brief while, there was not a thing of any sort left whole in the chamber. Then she took to be sulky again, and sat herself down on a bench fixed against the wall, beating her foot against the ground, and biting the string of beads she wore round her neck with a pull which looked as if it was about to be torn asunder.

Presently the woman's tailor made his appearance, and he and the bridegroom began jesting with each other, seemingly to be as indifferent of her presence as though she was a stone. From this Jonas Tietape got to his tricks—he tumbled, he juggled, he did so many wonders and in so ludicrous a way, that Judith found herself more than once unable to refrain from joining in the hearty mirth they caused. By this time, vexed to the heart as she had been, she could not help feeling unusually hungry, which cannot be thought singular when it is known she had scarce ate anything the whole day, and had had a long ride in the keen air. It was now getting late, yet no sign of a meal had appeared. She could not bring herself to say anything, were it ever so, yet she would have been right glad to have had an opportunity of breaking her fast.

Notwithstanding her hunger, hour after hour passed by, and yet she saw no means

of satisfying it. Her companions continued to divert themselves as though they were so used to long fasts they cared not for eating. She expected no abundance, nor any show of delicacies where she was; but, as the time passed without bringing forth the slightest sign of diet of any sort, she began to fear she was in a fair way of suffering all the horrors of starvation. To her great relief, an old woman, with a visage like a dried applejohn, came and announced supper; and, all at once, her husband seemed to grow marvellous attentive, and offered his arm, with a wonderful affectionate speech, to lead her to the chamber where the supper was laid. She did not think proper to accept his civilities, but she rose and walked out of the chamber with him, as otherwise she would have been left alone and in the dark. She passed into another chamber—where there were a few stools and a table—as a ragged boy was serving up the supper.

The place was mean and bare, but the meal gave her even less satisfaction, for there looked not to be enough for one, and it was such as none but a beggar might have been content with. Judith, however, was by this time in so ravenous a mood that she was willing to let her pride wait upon her hunger. The meat looked stale and the bread hard and dry, but she felt she could have devoured even such poor eating with a fine relish. Such relish, however, she was not fated to enjoy; for, on a sudden, as the bridegroom was paying her some exceeding gallant compliments, his eye seemed to flash at something he took note of at the table, and he broke out into the most ungovernable fury of passion eye ever beheld. He expressed the terriblest indignation and rage, and actually seemed to foam at the mouth as he denounced the omission he perceived. There were no custards!

Though custards seemed as out of place amongst such miserable odds and ends as the table afforded, as a court dame in a lazarus-house, their absence was regarded as an offence not to be pardoned. In vain the bride urgently affirmed she cared not for custards; in vain she acknowledged she was content with what she saw before her, and was willing to make her supper of it—her husband, increasing in his fury, threw the viands out of the open casement, kicked over the table, and, taking up a three-legged stool, ran after the ragged urchin, swearing lustily he would make an example of him, for showing such neglect towards his new-made wife.

The woman's tailor had disappeared, so

that, on the departure of her husband, Judith found herself alone. Great as was her spirit, she felt somewhat alarmed at the outrageous violence she had just witnessed. Her appetite was gone; she cared not now for partaking of the godliest banquet the world could produce; and when the old woman entered, scarcely able to speak for very fear, the few exclamations she uttered pointed to matter so horrible, she begged she might be led to her chamber. This was readily done, and the old crone did not leave her till she had filled the mind of the young bride with the most fearful accounts of the terrible furious temper of her husband whenever he met with any sort of opposition. In other respects, he was described as a man so marvellously well disposed, any woman might be happy with him to the end of her days; but, whenever it chanced he was crossed, or contradicted, or opposed in any manner whatsoever, no whirlwind was so fierce as his wrath.

Judith locked herself in her chamber, not without a secret dread the door might presently be burst open, and herself be made a sufferer from such frantic violence as she had witnessed. Her meditations, which were none of the pleasantest, were frequently disturbed by strange, unnatural noises, which made her tremble from head to foot. She did not dare to stir—she could not attempt to go to sleep; but, from hour to hour, continued to expect to be involved in a scene of uproar which appeared to be going on below.

Little did she fancy that her husband all this while was never in so good a humor in his life, and that, saving a few minutes passed in making for her sole entertainment the unnatural screeches that so frightened her, he was feasting right merrily from a bountiful store of excellent meats, with his fast friend and counsellors, Jonas Tietape and Tommy Hart, and kept pledging with them bumper after bumper of most choice Gascon, to “The speedy and thorough taming of the Shrew.”

CHAPTER XXII.

These are the works of our God, whereby he would admonish the tyrants of this earth, that in the end he will be revenged of their cruelty, what strength soever they make in the contrary.

JOHN KNOX.

IT was on a morning of matchless beauty

—the sky being all around of a clear, intense blue, the soft, warm, voluptuous air, refreshed by its closeness to the sea, which looked of a delicious coolness and transparency—that a small ship, of that sort called a pink, was seen entering the Bay of Naples. It was evident she had no warlike intention, from the absence in her of any thing which showed a disposition for hostilities; nevertheless, a few guns, well placed, gave sure sign that she was not altogether unprepared to make a defence, should she be attacked. At this time, however, she neither expected nor sought to use such weapons; her sails were spread to catch the breeze that was gaily wafting her to her destined port; and on her deck might be seen several curious spectators enjoying the lovely prospect that opened before them.

Prominent amongst them there stood the figure of one in his full manhood, well favored in countenance, noble in figure, handsomely but not too bravely appareled, and bearing about him many other marks that point out a man of more than ordinary note in the eye of the world. He was addressing a youth that was leaning over the side of the vessel, and by his manner it might be supposed they were father and son, had not the deep affectionateness which beamed in the intellectual countenance of the elder one been mingled with a respect that spoke more of homage due to superior rank. The younger of the two, though the natural graces of his face and person, set off as they were with such admirable bravery as he displayed, might have seemed to furnish ample proof of relationship, the indifference, beyond the interests he could not help feeling for the objects to which his attention was directed, with which he listened to the speech of his most eloquent companion as he pointed out the beauties of the magnificent scene that every moment seemed to become more enticing, was sufficient assurance he was no son of his.

Such, in truth, was the case—the former being no other than our marvellous sweet Shakespeare, and the other Master William Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke's heir, to whom, at the desire of one whose slightest wish had long been the most absolute of laws, he was now travelling to the principal countries of Europe, as his governor, and diligently did he endeavor to fulfil satisfactorily the task he had undertaken. He strove, by all means in his power, to make the mind entrusted to him acquire whatever of knowledge, or the love of it, he himself possessed; and his discourse was so pregnant with high and noble truths, that often

the rude mariners that chanced to be within earshot of him, stopped what labour they were about, and forgot their business, however pressing it might be, as they listened to his wondrous speech.

Nor was it done less lovingly than diligently. Indeed, he had cheated himself into no common pleasure in the conceit, that the sunless heaps of love he might not feel for the mother, he could allow himself to feel for the son as her representative, image, and second self. All the voyage, he had secretly been feeding his heart with the most passionate transports for his young namesake and pupil; and as he was forced to conceal as much as lay in his power the idolatry with which the youth was regarded by him, and yet could not restrain the busy world within, he, at every convenient opportunity, privily committed his thoughts and feelings to paper, in the form of the most exquisite verse poet ever writ. This practice he continued for a long time after. Often, when he had been struggling to endure outwardly unmoved the coldness in the unconscious inheritor of the features of the noble lady, against the powerful influence of whose excellences he had so long and vainly struggled, has some passionate sonnet expressed and eased the fulness of his o'ercharged heart.

But this excess of affection rested not entirely, though, in sooth, it did in a marvellous great measure, on the grounds here stated; for he would fancy at times that, had his loved Hamnet lived, he would have been just such another goodly youth to look on as Master Herbert, and thereupon he would mingle the gallantry of his devotion to the representative of the best and loveliest lady of her age, with the touching earnestness of that fathomless love with which he had been wont to look on the sweetest, worthiest son fond father ever had.

Whilst he was talking, one who looked to be the captain, a sturdy Englishman, who knew well the country he was sailing to, joined the group, and, in answer to Master Shakspeare's praise of the smiling Eden from which he had been drawing such infinite contention, he launched out into very sharp abuse of it, vowing that it harbored so many who lived by spoiling and murdering all such as came in their way, that the place was clean unfit for a Christian to live in. In proof of what he advanced, he spoke of a noted brigand called Zingano—who had lately infested those parts—a captain of wandering Bohemians, who had made himself a terror to the whole neighborhood, by plundering travellers and

attacking and carrying off to their secret caves any one in their reach who could pay a tempting price for his ransom, making short work of such as they could not make a market of. This intelligence did, in some measure, damp the pleasure Master Shakspeare felt in observing so fair a scene; but much time was not allowed him for the entertainment of his disappointment, for, by this time, the pink had entered so far into the bay, that the anchor was let go, and preparations were made for an immediate landing.

Master Shakspeare's party consisted of himself and young Herbert, and the former's faithful serving-man, Simon Stockfish; with them came an aged mariner, of a wild, unnatural aspect, whose exceeding taciturnity was so much to the humor of Simon, that he engaged him to attend his master on shore, and help take charge of the luggage. They reached the landing-place without any hindrance or difficulty, and soon were in the streets of Naples, to the vast content of Master Herbert, who seemed to admire hugely every thing out of the ordinary that met his observation. His governor failed not to direct his attention to what was most worthy of note, but he looked too pleased with the aspect of all that met his gaze to heed much what was said.

In the house in which they presently took up their lodging they were so fortunate as to meet with a person ready, for a fitting reward, to do them all good services in showing them whatever in the city was considered worthy of observation. But all the talk of Naples then was of Vesuvius, for it was generally believed, from certain signs, that an eruption in that fiery mountain would soon display itself. Great alarm seemed to exist amongst the Neapolitans on this subject; and they who had property lying in the direction it was expected the burning lava would take, were busily devising all sorts of idle schemes for the saving of it.

Master Shakspeare determined to ascend the mountain, that his youthful charge might see one of the most marvellous of the deep mysteries of nature, yet no sooner was this known than many friendly attempts were made to dissuade him from it. The most horrible accounts were given of the danger there must be in making the ascent at such a period; added to which there were awful stories told him of the atrocities of the terrible Zingano and his band, whose haunts were in the very part of the mountain along which they must proceed. These, however, took little effect on him. He caused preparations to be immediately made for attempting the

ascent ; and, in case he might be molested by the brigands, all his party went well armed, and, for further security, he took with him, in addition to the usual guides, a strong escort of the town-guard.

Simon Stockfish appointed his new acquaintance to help him in carrying whatever might be required during the expedition ; for, though old, he did not look as if he lacked strength, and there was something in the sternness of his glance that satisfied Simon, in case of danger he would stand on his defence right sturdily. He therefore was properly armed, and took his place in the party.

They left Naples, and proceeded in the direction of the burning mountain, Master Herbert's governor very much lightening the way for him by pleasant and profitable discourse touching the nature and history of volcanos ; thence proceeding to notice the wondrous mischiefs they had done, more especially the destruction of the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum by showers of red hot cinders—this brought him to speak of Pliny and his miraculous escape from the terrible fate that overtook the inhabitants of those cities, and then he followed on with later eruptions, eliciting by apt questions from the guides, full particulars of what had happened in their experience ; and thence arose sundry narratives of the phenomena Vesuvius exhibited, descriptions of the destruction caused by the progress of the burning fluid, and certain marvellous escapes of the country people from the scorching and consuming element.

There was no great difficulty in passing from this subject to the brigands, and there followed an abundance of stories of their daring and savageness, in which different captains of them were made the heroes ; but, in especial, there was great mention of Zingano, who, according to all accounts, infinitely exceeded in audacity, courage, and fierceness, the most celebrated of his villainous brethren. Some spoke of him as a devil incarnate, not satisfied with plundering all who fell in his way, he was merciless as an enraged tiger to such as he took offence at ; others magnified his prowess to what was far beyond the ordinary, and touched upon instances he had afforded of succor to the distressed. Then came such accounts of his life as would have sufficed all the heroes of the table round. No romance was ever so marvellous, no ballad so full of strange adventure. Nevertheless, the guides, one and all, seemed deeply impressed with the truth of the most incredible

of such accounts, and if need were, would have borne testimony of their faithfulness.

My Lord of Pembroke's heir appeared to take but little heed of these narratives, as though he looked on them as old wives' fables, unworthy of the attention of a youth of noble blood.

His worthy governor had marked this indifference to matters of more moment, and not without some slight disquietude. He would put himself right earnestly to exalt his scholar's mind to nobler perceptions. With the deep interest in him he could not help feeling, no wonder his counsels sometimes, spite of his efforts to conceal how much his heart was in his task, looked to be of a warmer character than the situations of the parties seemed to warrant ; but the coldness with which such manifestations were invariably regarded, never failed quickly to bring him back to a proper state of self-control. It was a hard task for him to look on the living image of the noble-hearted woman to whom so large a portion of his best thoughts had been dedicated, with the unconcern of one who hath but a dependant's interest ; but it was harder still when the tender impulses which were struggling in his breast made themselves visible, to find them met by the proud wondering of a haughty spirit that considers kindness so shown as savoring of nothing so much as of a presumption that he is bound to check by every way in his power.

This time the behavior of his youthful charge had struck him more powerfully than on any preceding occasion, but he dissembled as well as he might, and pursued his way up the mountain, conversing in his ordinary cheerful manner with the guides. The path now began to be a troublesome one, the soil being composed, for the most part, of cinders and lava, which made an exceeding loose footing, so that each one of the party was forced to look carefully to his own progress.

Young Herbert, with an active guide, lightly and rapidly led the way : he was followed closely by Master Shakespeare, who anxiously kept up with him. At a little distance followed Simon Stockfish, silently entertaining numberless doubts as to the advantage of all this arduous climbing, and considering whether some fine stroke of policy could not be hit upon whereby such dangers as seemed most imminent might be diverted from his good master. Simon had, close at his hand, the old seaman from the Pink, carrying a basket, and though he seemed to have a friendly feeling towards

him, he did not think it necessary to communicate his good wishes; and as for the other, there could be little question he was in a like humor, for he scarcely so much as opened his mouth all the way. After them came other guides, and the escort followed at a convenient distance. It appeared as though nothing was so plain as the unncessariness of the latter, for there existed not in the neighborhood the slightest sign of living creature of any sort; the wild and desolate scene would not have accorded ill with groups of savage banditti, but there was no evidence of any such thereabouts.

They had climbed so far that their nearness to the volcano might easily be judged by the sulphureous fumes that pervaded the air, and by certain rumblings and shakings in the belly of the mountain. At last the atmosphere appeared to be gradually getting darker, and the rumblings did so increase as to shake the ground beneath their feet. Whereupon the guides wore a monstrous serious aspect, and did affirm with singular earnestness, these signs portended a speedy eruption, and that all were in singular jeopardy, from which there was no likelihood of escaping, unless they met with very marvellous good fortune.

The gloomy color of this intelligence Master Shakspeare liked not at all. But not on his own account was it so little pleasing to him, for he was not of a spirit to heed his own convenience or safety in a case of common danger, but he could not help certain uneasy thoughts of the infinite responsibility he had taken on himself in leading his young charge into a situation so fraught with peril. The life of one in whom the nature he so devotedly worshipped seemed part and parcel, was very far dearer than his own, and he trembled to think of the consequences, should aught of evil befall him. But Master Herbert would not hear of any retreating. He treated the prognostications of the guides as statements worthy of no credit, and being exceeding curious to see the crater, he bade all push on without an instant's loss; and, attended by his guide, briskly led the way. His worthy governor followed with all the speed possible, and his faithful serving-man, with his desperate looking associate, did their best to keep near at hand. The rest came straggling on at their leisure.

With all the activity displayed by the foremost, their progress was slow, and not unattended with danger. Frequently did their legs sink so deep into the hot cinders, their only footing, that it looked as if they

were to be swallowed up in that treacherous soil. A guide was engaged in pointing out to the travellers the course of the last stream of burning lava which had poured down the sides of the volcano, when, on a sudden, there came a terrible explosion, that seemed to deafen all who heard it, which was followed by the shooting up from the crater of an immense pillar of burning stone and ashes, that fell on the other side of the mountain, in a mass that would soon have annihilated a city. Presently this black pillar turned into one of fire, spouting up to an immeasurable height, in the midst of which were seen huge masses of rock thrown up as though shot out of a great cannon, which fell thundering down the sides of the volcano, splitting into fragments as they fell.

Scarcely had this terrible eruption commenced, when the leaders of the party had reached a sort of shelf or platform overlooking the crater, whence the fearfulllest sight broke on them eye ever saw. The mountain, like an enormous monster, continued to belch out immense volumes of fire and flame, that reached a height at which the eye ached to follow it, and it broke in a resistless flood that went boiling, hissing, and scorching down the side of the mountain, and into the valley beneath, threatening the destruction of all the orchards, gardens, and villages that lay in the direction it was taking.

Master Shakspeare could not forbear shuddering as he remembered that a change in the wind might bring upon the heads of his party the whole power of this consuming inundation. He could not sufficiently marvel at the sublimity of the spectacle before him; but, attractive as it was, he would have given all he was worth in the world to have got his charge at that moment some fifty miles off.

A new danger threatened him much more imminent than the one he had such dread of, from which there appeared to be no escape. Whilst all eyes were directed to the huge mouth of the burning mountain vomiting such prodigious volumes of fire, one of the guides, in accents of terror, cried out, "Zingano! Zingano!" and all turning at that instant, discovered a tall, stout bandit, with a dark and savage aspect, well armed with sword and dagger, pistolet and arquebus, within a few yards of them, on the same ledge of the mountain, whilst, from various eminences that overlooked them, appeared several of a like threatening appearance, whose pieces were pointed at them with matches ready, as much as to

say if they stirred they were no better than so many dead men. Resistance was hopeless ; they had advanced so expeditiously as to leave their lagging escort behind them, at a distance too far off to know the strait they were in, or to be able to render them any assistance.

Zingano suffered not his victims to have much time for reflection, or to mistake his intentions. With a monstrous loud and insolent voice, he bade the party deliver their purses and all they had about them of value, threatening speedy death if delayed they a moment in doing his bidding. Had assistance not been so near, they would have been stripped at once and carried off captive, but the object was to get what booty they could easiest obtain and quickest depart with.

Seeing, whichever way they looked, a horrible cut-throat visage peering at them from the further end of a tube, that in a moment or so could put a ball through their heads, without a chance of escape, they took to getting ready what was wanted of them as speedily as was possible. Even Simon Stockfish was so taken by surprise, he prepared to deliver all he possessed, without aiming at a single stroke of policy, either for his worthy master or for himself.

All at once there came a cry from one of their own party—or rather a shriek of exultation such as a savage Indian might be supposed to make at the sight of an enemy in his power, and, turning to whence it came, how greatly did they marvel at seeing the aged seaman whom they had taken from the Pink to help them in the ascent, leap before them with all the quickness of a deer, and armed only with a long knife, confront the captain of the bandits. The recognition was evidently natural—a cry of terror, involuntarily as it were, burst from the lips of Zingano, better known to the reader as Black Sampson, as he heard the cry of "Blood ! blood !" hissed into his ears. He saw at a glance that the eyes which were piercing through him were those of the old shepherd, whose gallant son he had so ruthlessly slain.

With a mighty effort he suddenly sought to nerve himself for a deadly encounter with his remorseless pursuer, and swaying with his vigorous arm by the end of the barrel, the weapon he held in his hand, he sought to crush him at a blow. Ere it descended, however, the shepherd had leapt upon him, and his knuckles were at his throat : then commenced a most fearful struggle—not only from the deadly rage which animated the breasts of each with equal degree, but

from the perilous place in which the conflict was carried on.

They stood only within a few feet of the spouting gulf of fire, the intense heat of which became hardly possible to breathe in, and for their footing they had a loose soil of cinders and lava that crumbled at the slightest tread. Nevertheless, each looked only to his enemy, thought only of his enemy, and in such looking and thinking had but one object—his quick and utter destruction. No weapons were used, there was no time to employ them ; it appeared as though the first thing sought was by mere strength to overpower the other, and then dispatch him.

The old shepherd had got a good grip, and he held on like grim death. The bandit put forth every muscle to free himself, but with little avail, and his companions would readily have put a bullet through his antagonist, did not the constant twisting and turning of the combatants make a sure aim impossible. Some would have come to their captain's assistance, but the ledge where they stood was so narrow, from a part of it having just given way, that another could not get there without incurring a very horrible risk, and they also thought that the old man was not strong enough to be a fit match for their famous leader.

Apparently without knowing it, they were gradually nearing the brink of the crater, the ashes sunk beneath their pressure, and fragments of the ledge continued to break off, and fall into the fiery mass now boiling and raging so awfully near them. Still neither relaxed in his endeavors—neither thought of the horrors of his position. Each had contrived to get one arm fixed as in a vice round the other's waist, and the gipsy was intent on drawing the other away from the grasp it had, to seize a weapon ; but to keep such advantage as he had, he was fain to hold on and continue his fierce struggling and wrestling. At last, with the quickness of lightning, he snatched the dagger from his girdle ; but in the very act of uplifting it, he was carried off his feet by a tremendous exertion of the old man, who, with a fierce shriek of horrible laughter, leapt with him in his arms into the boiling flood.

The horror-struck spectators saw them disappear, and the next instant they rose a whitened shapeless mass in the midst of an enormous spout of boiling lava, that rose like a fiery torrent into the sky—then they fell back, and in a thought became indistinguishably commingled with the flaming ingredients in that terrific caldron.

By this time the escort had approached so near, that the companions of Zingano, terrified by the spectacle they had witnessed, disappeared as speedily as they could, but not without one or two shots being fired at them, which, however, it is believed did no great damage. The travellers had seen enough of the burning mountain, and no one seemed disinclined to resist the wishes of the leader of the party to get back to Naples, before a change in the wind made their fate scarcely less terrible than that of the murderer and the avenger of his crime.

CHAPTER XXIII.

His countenance was a civil war itself,
And all his host had standing in their looks
The paleness of the death that was to come.

BEN JONSON.

IT was about the midwatch, in a serene night, a gallant pinnace might have been seen cleaving her way through the waves of that highroad to great adventures, commonly called the Spanish Main. To a sailor's eye, she was as fair a craft to look on as might be seen anywhere on the wide ocean, bravely appointed with warlike stores, and manned with a valiant company of daring adventurers, most of whom were as careless of life as though, in their estimation, it was not worth a pin's fee. A famous sight was it to see the good ship, "The Little Wolf," careering over the foaming billows that oftentimes raised their huge crests as though to topple her down headlong—in sooth, it was an admirable goodly sight: yet there were some persons to be met with who disliked it hingely; they could not hear the gallant pinnace so much as named without being terribly moved, and to get sight of her, no matter how strongly furnished they might be for war, they instantly fell into a deadly fear.

These were no other than the Spaniards inhabiting those coasts, or had occasion to voyage in those seas; and the reason of their monstrous fear was, that this same ship was known far and near amongst them as the terriblest scourge to all of their country the liveliest imagination could conceive. The crew were looked upon as a sort of roaring devils, and their captain it was thought could be no other than the archfiend himself. Since she had first appeared on that coast, it was wonderful the damage she had brought upon them; the strongest places and the powerfulest ships were of

no avail against the unnatural fierce valor of those on board of her: they were stormed and sacked in an incredible short space of time, and those who attempted opposition grievously hurt, or slain outright.

This captain was known on the coast as "the devil-Englishman," England having been his birthplace, as it was reported, but it was more generally believed he was a native of a much warner place rumor described after divers horrible fashions; some giving out that he was infinitely beyond the ordinary stature of man, with a wild inhuman countenance, the nostrils whereof had been seen to breathe fire, as several creditable witnesses could testify, and that he was of a most savage appetite, loving to pamper his delicate stomach on nothing so much as a new-born babe, carefully barbecued over a gentle fire, or tit-bits from a young virgin, daintily done in their own gravy.

That he had cloven feet there seemed not to be any dispute—nay, there was a certain priest who, in the midst of a most moving sermon touching the identity of the archenemy with this terror of the Spaniards, did avouch most solemnly that, when a prisoner on board the dreaded ship, he once came upon the devil-Englishman suddenly, and found him paring his hoofs, and, as undeniable proof of what he stated, he immediately produced to his fear-struck auditors a portion of the infernal paring he had then and there secreted.

Much more of these awful accounts found ready credence in those parts; but, although in some points they were exceeding contradictory, as regards the courage of the individual to whom they related, there seemed but one voice. Nothing could withstand his fierceness: he swept all before him, no matter how great the force, or how strong the defences, the whilst no hostile weapon or destructive missile had power to do him the least injury. Many a serious Spaniard had beheld a bullet drop to the ground, having been flattened upon his person; and more than one goodly rapier was shewn, the edge whereof quite turned from having been forcibly thrust against him.

Of his first appearance in those seas there were various legends; but the best informed seemed to take on themselves to say that he began to war against them as a person of little or no authority, yet that his terrible furious courage soon raised him above his associates. From a small command he quickly rose to a greater, and had been wont latterly to come upon them with

from one to five or six large ships, well equipped with all munitions of war, and with valiant and skilful crews, that took all vessels coming in their way, attacked the towns and villages upon the coast, and plundered them of whatever of value they possessed that could be carried away, spoiling them, and doing them such intolerable mischiefs, the like had not been heard of in the memory of man.

The men who joined in this warfare were known in that part of the world by the name of buccaneers, from the manner of curing their meat; and the chief of these, or at least the most famous amongst their leaders, was now this terrible fierce captain. It was said that they were no better than pirates, making war without any authority, save their own desperate inclinations; but, let them be what they would, it is certain they were a monstrous evil to the Spaniards in those seas, against whom, in especial, they were exceedingly implacable.

They were people of many countries; but principally English, Dutch, Portuguese and Moors, of the most adventurous and fearless sort the world contained, who took to the high seas as a road to fortune; and, though they were ever in a constant peril of their lives, they, for the most part, managed to amass great riches, with which they that escaped after many years' fighting with their enemies, returned to their several countries, and were ever after looked upon as persons of worship.

These buccaneers would appear in the Spanish Main with sometimes one, sometimes more ships; and, making a landing at some place on the coast, where they knew beforehand they were like to get, with a few hard knocks, good store of plunder, they would steal upon the inhabitants when they least expected them, and, slaying all who made opposition, take all the gold and silver, and other precious stuff they could lay hand on, and, when they had obtained all they could, would get on board and sail away.—Perchance they would meet ships of the Spaniards of equal or greater force; but these they would attack, and, in an incredible short space, get the better of.

Such was the marvellous courage on which they entered upon their most desperate enterprises, it seemed as though there was no resisting them. On land or at sea, attacking the strongest towns or the biggest ships, they so rarely failed of destroying and spoiling their adversary, that many of the terrified Spaniards looked upon them as leagued with the powers of darkness, and did utter or give credence to the strange

tales concerning them and their captain, such as hath awhile since been mentioned.

It was on an expedition of this sort that the good ship, "the Little Wolf," was now pursuing her course. She had sailed in company with two smaller vessels from the general place of assembling of these adventurers in the Western Indies, but had been separated from them in a tremendous storm, which drove her at the mercy of the winds, day and night, till the crew were nigh spent with watching and labor. Moreover, the water and provision were found to run short, which greatly increased the discontent. Of buccaneers, the common sort were, by reason of their riotous, disorderly habits, not easily kept in any sort of discipline, and any mischance or reverse of fortune they took so ill, that it was only by great heedfulness on the part of their appointed officers, they could be held in proper subjection.

In the case of the Little Wolf they were horribly dissatisfied every one of them: they had been so tossed about, they had lost their reckoning; none knew for certain where they were, yet many presumed to find fault with the course they were steering, and murmurs, and even threats, were heard amongst the most turbulent. Their captain they knew to be a thorough seaman, and as brave a leader as brave men ever fought under; nevertheless, they were not wanting, some amongst them who looked upon his rule as intolerable, and were for any change by which they fancied they could in any way better themselves. Their captain was strict, keeping every man to his duty, and punishing sharply the slightest disobedience. This fretted their proud stomachs monstrously, especially those who were not of his nation. They could not endure such sharp handling, and seemed only to wait for an opportunity to put an end to it.

It was under such circumstances that the ship was proceeding on her way, as hath been described at the commencement of this chapter. The watch had been set, and in general all seemed fair and orderly, save ever and anon a burst of riotous merriment would break forth from the forecastle, where it was evident enough, of all conscience, a numerous party of the crew were entertaining themselves, after their own rough fashion. On the main deck, as far as possible from the hearing of the revellers, two boys were sitting together away from close scrutiny on one of the guns. They spoke in a low voice, and, as it seemed, in a manner especially savoring of confidence.

"Nay, I like not this seafaring life, Martin," said one, who, out of all doubt, was no

other than our especial acquaintance, lazy Launce, the runaway apprentice of Tabitha Thatchpole, and his companion was his sworn fellow and loving friend, Martin Poins, his opposite neighbor. Neither looked the better for their rash embracing of that wild, adventurous life they had adopted—the one from impatience of the hard rule of his severe mistress, the other that he might share the fortunes of his sworn lover. Hearing there was a ship of war lying in the Thames, which it was rumored was about to sail for the Spanish Main, where her captain had already greatly signalized himself by his valor and seamanship, they got on board, volunteered to serve the captain, and, being approved of by him, they had been ever since sharply employed learning to fulfil the duties of a sailor.

"I like not this seafaring life, Martin. It jumpeth not with my humor at all," said Launce, with marvellous seriousness. "I wish very heartily I were well back again in Golden Lane. The cuffs and ratings I got of that old cat afforded fair entertainment, in comparison with the intolerable climbings aloft for the bending of sails or some other villainous hard work, and the constant fear of my life I am in through the terrible furious storms we have had since we left the Thames. Though I had in Barbican such monstrous abundance of hardships and ill-usage as ever poor 'prentice endured, I had on an occasion no lack of good sport, but in the horrible case in which I am now tossed like a cat in a blanket, on the Spanish Main, there are no tailors at hand to play tricks upon, or constables of the watch, or old women, or stray pigs, to have any proper diversion with, or dogs or cocks to set a fighting. There are no late passengers to pelt prively from the window as they pass unsuspecting along the street, nor a chance of a stolen game of bowls as I go of an errand; and, as for a delectable draught of tickle-brain to comfort one's-self withal, I have as clean lost sight of such a thing, as though such good liquor had vanished out of the world."

"A hard case, o' my life!" exclaimed Martin Poins, very gravely. "Were I you, I would no longer put up with such grievous losses, but straightway be quit of the good ship and her company, and walk myself off."

"Ah, there's the horrible mischief of it," said the other, in an exceeding lamentable tone. "I am like a pig in a pound;—I must e'en stay where I am, whether I will or no."

"Doubtless!" answered his associate, drily.

"If it should be my good hap to get back to Golden Lane," added Launce, with a prodigious show of sincerity, "I promise you any sort, come what will on't."

"Dost remember the famous words you gave utterance to when you sought me to join with you in this adventure?" inquired Martin. "How hugely you comforted yourself with the great store of gold you were to gain by your assisting in taking of some Spanish galleon, and how gallantly you would conduct yourself in every desperate enterprise, till you had raised yourself to be a great captain, and how you would marry some king's daughter at the least, when it suited you, and in good time succeed to his wealth and kingdom? Dost remember—"

"Body o' me, I am in no humor of remembering of anything," cried his friend, impatiently. "But, as for Spanish galleons, I wish not for their acquaintance, for I am told they are armed with guns, that do terrible execution when they are let off; and that the Spaniards we are so intent on spoiling have a villainous way with them of putting to death all of our nation that fall into their hands. Methinks they and their goods are best let alone. For mine own part, I regard them with no malice, and care to do them no injury. But, hush, what choice singing is this?"

The two young men listened attentively, and they distinctly heard, in a fine, manly voice, tolerably familiar to them already, the verses which are here set down :

THE BUCCANEER'S SONG.

Come, seek with me the blushing girls
That India's spicy islands hold;
Where ev'ry stream doth brim with pearls,
And ev'ry rock doth burst with gold:
And where some overladen tree,
Holds low its store of purple berry—
Their charms shall prove our argosie,
And there we'll feast and live right merry!

You paler beauties of the south
May serve to grace a gallant's feast,
Who's tasted not the luscious mouth
We find within the burning East.
Love there a draught more sweet secures,
Than gaseon, muscadine, or sherry:
Then make the bounteous vintage yours,
There take your fill, and be right merry!

"Doth not *that* move you?" asked Martin Poins, as soon as the singer had come to a halt.

"'Tis an exquisite song, o' my life," replied Launce, "and I have heard many such

from the same singer; yet I like him not, Martin."

"Nor do I," said the other, with more seriousness than he had yet affected. "I know not what he may have been before he sought his fortune in this ship; but there seemeth to be that in him which smacks of a better condition. Nevertheless, I like him none the better for it, for I much doubt his honesty. I have seen him laying himself out very craftily to catch the voices of the worst-disposed of the crew, particularly affecting the foreigners. I cannot help fancying he harbors some ill design; for I like not the manner I ever find him in corners holding converse with all who are known to be dissatisfied with the voyage."

"I have heard it said, and very roundly too, the captain is much to blame," observed Launce.

"And so have I, many times," answered Martin. "But, as far as I can learn, from the best informed in such matters, nothing better could have been done in such stormy weather as we have had, and I hugely suspect these grumblings are produced only by envy and jealousy, and the like evil passions in they who are discontented."

"Hush, surely this is him coming this way!" exclaimed the other; "and he being to-night captain o' the watch, may chance not be well pleased to find us loitering here. Let us hide till he has passed."

There happened to be thrown over the gun a large piece of sail-cloth, to which some repairs had been made during the day, and not having been finished, it had there been left until it could be thoroughly mended. Under this, Launce and his friend, as quickly as they could, disappeared.

They had scarcely done so when two men were seen approaching slowly towards the place, engaged in deep and earnest discourse. One was an Englishman, a tall fellow of his hands, with somewhat of a slouching gait and with an exceeding dissolute look. Doubtless, this was the person to whom allusion had just been made. The one with whom he was in company was evidently a Moor, by his complexion and apparel. His yellow eye-balls seemed to gain additional ghastliness in the moonlight, and there was treachery in every line of his swarthy features. He was, like his companion, a proper fellow of his inches, and of an exceeding powerful frame. To look at the countenances of these two, and notice the earnest manner of their discoursing, the understanding observer might readily have suspected something unusually damnable and treacherous; and such suspicions would soon have received

strength through a little attention to their discourse.

"I tell thee, Abdallah, the plot cannot fail," observed the Englishman, in a low voice, as he approached the hiding-place of the runaway apprentice and his friend; and these were the first words they heard, but they caught much of what followed, the conspirators continuing to pace up and down close to them on the moon disappearing behind a cloud—"I have got over all but my countrymen, and I can easily secure them also, when they discover there is at least three to one against them. But there is one thing, without which our chance of success will be little, even with all the advantages we possess."

"Let thy slave know thy pleasure in this matter," answered the Moor, "and doubt not it shall be as thy heart desireth."

"The captain must be made away with before any thing else is attempted," said the other. "I know thy great courage, Abdallah, and have that confidence in thy discretion, I can entrust this important business only to thy sure hand."

"I have already settled the proper execution of it, O Compton," replied Abdallah. "I have so planned, that I can readily enter his cabin when he sleeps—my trusty blade will do the rest."

"Good; but when can this be accomplished?" inquired Compton. "The plot is ripe; I would not have a moment lost.—Let us burst forth before any smell it out. I would have it done this night—ay, this minute,—if within the warrant of possibility."

"Such is thy slave's design," replied Abdallah. "Our great captain shall meet his death, in his first sleep, this night."

"That is well thought of, Abdallah. I like the plan on't marvellously," said his companion. "The other officers we can dispose of more at our leisure; but prythee, noble friend, take good heed he escape not. Remember, thou art to be my lieutenant, and that a life of sweetest enjoyment, with exhaustless hoards of Spanish gold, await us when we have got possession of this ship."

"By the beard of the prophet, I swear to thee, he shall die!" answered the Moor.

Launce listened with very different feelings to those of Martin, though both youths were horribly astonished at the treachery thus laid open to them. The one felt as though he dared scarcely breathe, and trembled from head to foot; but the other, though greatly alarmed with the imminence of the danger, was anxious to make some effort

to prevent it. To issue from his concealment, he knew would insure certain death, if discovered. The arch-conspirators would not hesitate to slay one who had got possession of their villainous secrets ; and to remain where he was would be to prevent all possibility of an alarm being given in time to prevent the approaching massacre.

Not an instant was to be lost. Whispering to Launce to remain quiet till his return, Martin softly took off his shoes ; then, when he knew, by the retreating footsteps, that the backs of the conspirators were towards him, he raised the sail-cloth, and crept away from it very cautiously across the path they would make in returning. When he thought they had got their usual distance, he lay quiet, and endeavored to still the violent beating of his heart. This was the critical moment. It was too dark to distinguish objects at a little distance ; but, should the moon appear whilst the conspirators were approaching, he could not fail of being detected.

He waited in an agony of suspense.—Suddenly they both stopped, and he felt assured all was over with him. To his great relief, they did not cease talking, and he heard, with a terrible distinctness, some of the details of the murders that were about to be acted. At last they continued their paces, evidently too intent on their treason to notice his closeness to them. As soon as their backs were fairly turned, he again commenced creeping on all-fours, and so continued, stopping when they approached, and cautiously proceeding when they retreated, till he had got himself out of danger.

In the meantime, Launce lay quaking for very fear. He would have given all he was worth in the world, and all he was like to be, from that time forward—his hopes of the galleon, of being a great captain, and of marrying a king's daughter into the bargain—only to have been safe on his accustomed pallet, in the well-remembered chamber in Tabitha Thatchpole's homely dwelling.

How bitterly he lamented his folly in quitting such a delectable spot as he now looked on it, and so sweet a mistress as he now considered the very shrewish Tabitha, to be in daily risk of drowning, escaping which he stood in hourly fear of having his throat cut ! He could have cried with vexation, had he not been well aware that the slightest noise might betray him ; and then—he trembled from head to foot, and dared not think of the peril he was in.

He marvelled greatly that Martin Poins had left him, and entertained intolerable

fears that it might lead to the discovery of his concealment—and there he lay crouched up, like a frozen snake, expecting the very horriblest deaths in every creak of the cordage or whistle of the wind, that sounded louder than ordinary.

The two conspirators appeared to have much to say, ere they could settle their plans to their liking—they agreed that the time for action had arrived, and that the mutiny should break out forthwith.

The massacre of the captain and his officers was to be followed by an attack on those of the English amongst the crew who were not disposed to join them, and then the ship's course was to be altered, and a certain town on the American coast, which was believed to be richly furnished and but weakly guarded, was to be surprised, the place sacked, and they who could not ransom themselves to be put to death ; after which, they were to cruise on that coast till every man was as rich as he wished to be. Then they were to sell the ship and her prizes to the Portuguese, and every one return to his own country, or wherever else he liked, to enjoy his gains. At last, they parted—the Moor going to the captain's cabin for the purpose of murdering him with his own hand, and Compton proceeding to the rest of the conspirators to prepare them for immediately commencing the attack on the other officers and men they had determined on getting rid of.

Launce heard their retreating footsteps, but he was in so deadly a fear he could not dare to lift up the sail to see if the coast was clear.

Compton proceeded on his errand. Just then the moon escaped from the clouds which had veiled her glories, and poured a flood of soft light upon the ship and along the waves over which she was so gallantly floating. He glanced a sharp and eager eye around him, and noted the extreme negligence of those who kept watch. This augured well for his plot, and he smiled exultingly, as he saw how unprepared those from whom he feared any resistance were, for the fierce encounter which was to wrest the ship out of their hands, to give it into his.

This man had been born in a respectable station, and was not without parts, but had led so dissolute a life that all his friends had disowned him, and, after committing all manner of villainies, he had been fain to go to sea, to escape the hue and cry set for him.

In the present expedition, he had been allowed a small command, but this served only the greater to excite his huge ambition.—

He must needs be first in the enterprise he and his companions were upon, and, to obtain this station, he cared not what monstrous crimes he committed.

He passed on to the forecastle, where several of the conspirators were waiting in expectation of the summons that was to set them at the work of slaughter. They appeared to be carousing, as if they had no such thoughts in their heads. The Englishmen had gone to their hammocks. This was what they had counted on, and what was wanted for the full success of their infamous designs. They now only waited the appearance of their new captain to break out into open mutiny. Compton was seen approaching—whereupon all started from the places where they had been sitting or lying, as the case might be, and hailed him as their captain.

They were a wild crew—the scum of all nations—each in the manner of dressing that best pleased his fancy, and all variously armed,—fierce, unruly ruffians, that had lived by cutting purses, had abandoned that vocation for the more perilous one of cutting throats, and had taken service with their captain from the fame of his bravery and success in all his enterprises.

"Now, my masters, to our rendezvous on the quarter-deck!" exclaimed Compton, exultingly—"and then a sharp struggle, and the ship is our own."

"Hurrah for Compton!" answered the mutineers right lustily. "He alone shall be our captain!—Death to all who oppose him!—Away with the tyrant, Daring!—Ho, for Spanish gold, and a free life!"—And, with divers other sentences of a like character, in as many different languages, the mutineers rushed in a body towards the quarter-deck, to ent down all who should withstand them, as they sought to take possession of the ship; whilst another body of them, under the command of the Moor, was to murder the officers and seize on the magazines.

On they came, sure of gaining an easy victory over their unsuspecting messmates; nor did they discover their error till they had made good their footing on the deck, when they were brought to a speedy halt, crowded altogether as they were, by perceiving the Englishmen they believed to be secured under hatches, with the officers they had supposed to be murdered, drawn up, well armed, with an evident intention of disputing their further progress.

In front of them was a figure, beneath the fire of whose eagle eye the stoutest of them quailed. He had not had time to put on his

doublet, and most of his people were in a like predicament, but all had got arquebuses, or pistolets, or swords, or pikes, or other serviceable weapons; and, though greatly inferior to the mutineers in numbers, they were like to make the contest more doubtful than seemed agreeable to any of them.

The captain stood in front of his faithful followers, his brawny arm bared to his elbow, with his trusty sword in his hand, and the other clutching a pistol that was in his belt. His countenance bore, in every line of it, the desperate valor which had carried him in triumph through so many fierce encounters. At his side was Martin Poins, by whose timely warning he had been enabled to make such arrangements for his safety as we have noticed; and, at a convenient distance, Launce might be seen, looking to be in no pleasant plight, very desirous of getting out of harm's way, yet not being able to satisfy himself as to where he should be as safe as he desired.

"Why, how now?" exclaimed the captain, tauntingly, as he noticed the surprise the mutineers exhibited. "By Gog and Magog, but these are fine doings truly, ye mutineering dogs! Back, every one of ye, or ye shall have no better hammock this night than a shark's paunch is like to afford.—To your duty, knaves!"

"Down with him!" cried Compton, who hoped, with his superior force, to bear down all opposition. "Behold, my masters, we are three to one, as it is, and the Moor will anon come to our assistance."

"Methinks you are reckoning woefully without your host, ye thrice treacherous villain!" replied his captain. "Behold him from whom you expect succor!" Compton turned his eyes in the direction the other pointed, and, to his extreme horror, discovered the body of his fellow-conspirator, Abdallah, hanging at the fore-yard-arm. The moon shone full on his features, which were convulsed with agony, so that he presented an awful spectacle.

Villain as he was, Compton was brave—and, seeing the desperateness of the case, he determined on not being subdued without a struggle. Turning to his followers, amongst whom some were already wavering, he cried out amain—"Revenge, my masters! revenge the noble Moor! If you wish to 'scape his fate, follow me, and the ship is our own. Down with the tyrant! Ho, for Spanish gold and a free life!"

He was answered by a loud cheer, and the mutineers rushed, in a body, on the rest of the crew, who came forward manfully

with their favorite cry of "A Daring! a Daring!" and a fierce and terrible fight ensued. The captain was attacked at once by Compton and two of his foreign associates, powerful knaves, who singly seemed more than a match for him; but one he pistoleroed on the spot, and the other was knocked on the head by Martin Poins with a heavy axe, with which he had armed himself. Left only with the arch-plotter to deal with, he set himself to bring the matter to a speedy ending.

Compton was both strong and valiant, and he fought with the fierceness of a desperate man, who has set his all upon a cast; but he had but small chance against so determined a combatant. Whatever might be the degree of credibility attached to the Spaniard's estimation of him, certain is it the terrible Englishman was invulnerable to his present assailant, and in a few short minutes his sword was passed, with fatal effect, through Compton's body. As they had already lost many of their number by the fire which the English part of the crew assailed them, both from aloft and other advantageous places, directly they commenced their attack, the fall of their leader further dispirited the mutineers that they began to give way.

It was at this critical moment that a voice was heard shouting out from the mast head, "A sail! a sail!" which appeared to have quite a magical effect on the crew. They desisted from all show of fighting on the instant. Due inquiries were presently made; and, on its being stated that she was a Spaniard, and like enough to be the very treasure-ship they had been so exceedingly desirous of meeting, one shout of universal obedience to their leader broke forth from them to a man, the mutineers joining in it more lustily than any; they acknowledged entire submission to his pleasure, endeavoring to excuse themselves for their late crime, on the plea that they had been worked upon by designing villains, who sought to make of them the stepping-stones to their own ambition, and promised, with many signs of repentance, that if they were forgiven their fault they would so conduct themselves against the enemy as should prove they were not unworthy of being commanded by so great a captain.

Captain Harry Daring saw the politeness of agreeing to their request at such a time; so, after a brief admonition, and a few sharp speeches showing the enormity of their offences, he bade the wounded to be looked to, and the dead to be thrown overboard, but solemnly vowed the Moor

should hang were he was, as a token of the disgrace of the crew, till they had made prize of the Spanish ship: then he sent them to their several duties. This mingling of severity and conciliation had its due effect. Every one strove to do his utmost for the pleasureing of his captain; and few persons, at this moment, called to observe the unanimity and extraordinary diligence exhibited in every part of the ship, could have supposed that a few minutes before it had been the scene of the most desperate mutiny.

Under the able directions of the captain, assisted by his officers, the good ship, the Little Wolf, was rapidly approaching the Spaniard. At first, those in the latter appeared to give themselves no concern, perchance noticing how greatly superior was their size, or not taking the other to be an enemy; but when they got closer view of her, and beheld her to be no other than the terrible ship that had already done their nation such huge damage, they set up all their sails, and strove earnestly to escape as speedily as they could.

The gallant leader of the buccaneers was not of a temper to allow so golden a chance to slip out of his hands, now, after so much watching and travail, he had, as it were, a hold of it; for out of all doubt, it was the galleon, to intercept which had been the principal object of his expedition. He knew her capture would enrich himself and all his followers for life—she was reputed to carry such immense wealth; therefore he made every preparation, not only to overtake her in her flight, but to attack her, with all his means of offence, as soon as ever he could get within shot of her.

The Spaniard was too heavily laden to be a good sailer, and therefore it was no marvel the smaller and lighter vessel gained upon her rapidly. The decks were cleared for action; every man was armed with whatever weapons best suited the occasion; ammunition was served out, the guns were loaded, and the gunners standing by, with matches lighted, to discharge the murderous missiles they contained, and all were on the tip-toe of expectation.

At this time it was Captain Harry Daring called to him Master Poins, and, after much commendation of him before all his officers for the good service he had rendered them all, presented him with a purse of gold to provide for him in case he should fall in the approaching engagement, and named him to be a junior officer under him, expressing a hope that amongst those whom he had so well served, he would find a

friend to realize his good wishes, in case he should be deprived of the power of doing so himself. Whereupon all his chief officers readily promised that, should any mischance occur to their captain, which he hoped might never be, they would see that Martin Poinz was well cared for.

Thus was Martin already, through his courage and prudence, placed on the high-road to fortune, whilst Launce looked only to be in a worse case than ever. In the first bruit of an engagement with the galleon, wishing himself cuffed and rated by the ungentle Tabitha within an inch of his life rather than were he was, he, unnoticed by any one, stole away, and hid himself in an empty tub in the ship's hold.

The report of the Little Wolf's great guns spoke in a pretty loud voice that the two ships were getting to be within reach of each other's shot. This was answered by the great guns of the Galleon, who, seeing they could not get away, determined on making what resistance they could, and with their immense superiority in every way it seemed probable to her commander they might succeed in beating off the buccaneers, or sinking the dreaded vessel with their heavy ordnance. These discharges soon began to be very brisk and fierce on both sides, but the Galleon floating so much higher in the water than the pinnace, her shot usually pitched clean over her, whilst on the contrary, almost every time the buccaneers fired, the shot wounded her enemy either in the spars or rigging or hull, besides doing infinite mischief upon her crowded decks.

The little pinnace all this time came gallantly up to her huge enemy, and, after pouring in a destructive broadside, lost no time in grappling with her for the purpose of taking her by boarding. This, however, was an exceeding difficult matter to accomplish, the sides of the larger ship rising up before the other like a wall, the decks being guarded by nettings, behind which stood a close array of hostile Spaniards, pouring down all sorts of heavy missiles, and shooting of their pieces at their assailants as fast as they could load them.

The sight of the Moor hanging at the fore-yard-arm struck an extraordinary terror in them, and doubtless, with the terrible reputation of the Devil-Englishman, made their defence more weak than it might have been; for when they found that so deadly a fire was kept upon them from the tops of the Little Wolf, that it brought them down by scores, and that their enemies climbed up to their decks with the agility and fierceness

of wild cats, whils others dropped upon them from the over-hanging rigging of their own ship, they began to be monstrously dispirited, and gave way.

The confusion of Babel was nothing to the uproar which existed in both ships, the one crowded with grandes of Spaniards returning with all their treasure from the new world to the old, inciting by their example and oratory the soldiers that were on board to guard the galleon, to beat back the furious enemy, whilst the other, no less intent on making their way, came on shouting of all sorts of wild tumultuous cries and execrations, in divers languages, enough by themselves to daunt the stoniest hearts. Then interspersedly were heard the screams of the women on board the Spanish ship, the groans of the wounded, and the constant discharge of arquebuses and pistolets making the most infernal concert that can be conceived.

At last Harry Daring, supported by a considerable number of his crew, made good his footing on the deck of the galleon. He had in his hand a monstrous battle-axe, which with tremendous force he swung around him, crushing to the earth every Spaniard on whom it fell. Many a desperate intent was made to bring him down, but the few who were so fortunate as to survive them fled from before his terrible strokes, crying out to their fellows to save themselves from the Devil Englishman. A gallant band of Dons, who were evidently made of the best stuff their country afforded, still kept up a stiff defence, supported by the more courageous of the soldiers.

"Down with the villain Spaniards!" cried the captain of the buccaneers, with all the energy of his earlier days, as he rushed forward to attack his enemies.

"A Daring! A Daring!" shouted his men, now every instant increasing in numbers, as they threw themselves upon the Spaniards. The battle was fierce, but short. The bravest of the Dons were cut to pieces, and the rest fled or surrendered; and in a few minutes the huge ship w th all her treasures became the property of Harry Daring and his crew. |

A curious incident occurred during the hottest part of the engagement—the body of the Moor suddenly disappeared, and no one knew where or how; but divers had shrewd suspicions, a person reputed to be of a like color with him had come and claimed his own; nevertheless, I incline to the opinion that he was shot away by some of the great ordnance and fell into the sea.

The wealth found in the galleon exceed-

ed the conquerors' expectations. Ingots of gold and bars of silver, with heaps of coin and plate beyond all counting, and bags of pearls and other precious stones, together with an incalculable abundance of the most costly merchandize, appeared before them till the eye marvelled there should be such wondrous store of riches in the world. This was all taken from the galleon and placed in the pinnace, after which the former was allowed to proceed on her voyage. A division of the booty soon afterwards took place, to the monstrous satisfaction of every one of the crew of the Little Wolf. As Launce had disappeared, it was supposed he had fallen in the contest; when, whilst his fast friend Martin, who had behaved himself very stoutly throughout the fight, was lamenting his supposed loss, he crept from his concealment so privily no one knew he had been there, and now all danger was over, took care to make it believed he had distinguished himself amongst the Spaniards in a terrible heroical manner.

Of the gallant Harry Daring let it suffice here to say, that he continued to be the greatest scourge to the Spaniards they had ever known, spoiling them of their substance, and overthrowing all their armaments, whether on land or on sea. Indeed, after the taking of the treasure-ship, his reputation as "The Devil-Englishman" was more fierce than before. Amongst his own men, he grew to be in such extraordinary estimation, he had soon several ships and some thousands of followers of all nations desirous of being led by him, and there never after was any thing in the shape of a mutiny attempted by any one of them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A sweeter swan than ever sung in Po—
A shriller nightingale than ever blest
The prouder groves of self-admiring Rome.
THE RETURN FROM PARNASSUS.

She who tamed the world tamed herself at last, and, falling under her own weight, fell a prey to time.

JAMES HOWELL.

Who that hath either heart or brain can walk unmoved among the vestiges of fallen greatness that attract attention on every side of that city of cities, that birthplace of noble soldiership, that cradle of honorable freedom, that home of classic learning, that seat of omnipotent majesty, that altar of true religion; the feared, the honored, the condemned, the classical, the venerable

Rome? Who can see her crumbling baths, her ruined temples, her tottering aqueducts, her prostrate monuments, her shattered amphitheatres, and her desolate, silent, and choked-up forums, without calling to mind the greatness that hath passed away? What a marvellous story is here writ! ay, and what pregnant characters compose the writing!—they are your true hieroglyphics, whereof one hath the meaning of a volume.

Here you shall have a whole host of recollections of the infant colony struggling with its neighbors for a mere existence. There you shall gather as goodly a crop of memories from the Imperial City that gave conquerors and laws to all the world. In one place the mind is crowded with augurs, vestal virgins, sacrifices, incense, and hymns, and all the impressive worship which of old was offered up to that more powerful than creditable assemblage yclept the gods and goddesses; in another it finds room for no less numerous a company of lictors, centurions, præters, conscript fathers, orators, philosophers, and poets, and all, whether of the patrician or plebeian class, that belonged to the intelligence of the Seven Hilled City in its palmy days.

Here comes a gigantic memento of its gladiatorial barbarousness, there an enduring sign of its Apician refinement. One instant brings before us the peaceful luxury of an Augustus, another the brutal despoticism of a Nero. We behold in every thing presented to us a series of the noblest spectacles the world ever saw. The joyful city witnessing an ovation; the infant republic forcibly carrying off from a neighbor state such women as suited them for wives; the slaughter of Cæsar in the capitol; Coriolanus prevented by his domestic affections from leading the Volscians against his ungrateful city; Cincinnatus called from the plough to lead the armies of his country against the enemy; and Belisarius, blind and old, begging his bread amongst those whose safety his talents and his courage had secured.

These are but a few of the rallying places that, upon some remembrance starting up—as could not be avoided, wander where you might—gave occasion for a busy throng of associations to take exclusive possession of the mind. But these are such as most prominently and frequently came before the imagination of Master Shakespeare in his rambles with his beloved charge in this antique city. In particular, he dwelt with exceeding interest on the story of the exiled Coriolanus, lingered over the tragic fate of the noble Cæsar, referred to the

magnificent follies of the enamored Marc Antony with the seductive Cleopatra, and recalled the moving history of the haughty Tarquin and the abused Lucrece, as though he were never weary of having them brought under his consideration.

And on these subjects would he dilate to his young companion with an eloquence so winning, that the usually indifferent youth gave him all his attention, and appeared to feel almost as much interest for what he heard as he was sure to exhibit did a prettier face than ordinary come within sight of him, or there looked to be a horse-race, a religious procession, a mountebank, or any public sport or show that promised something new or marvellous.

Though my Lord of Pembroke's heir did not lack ability, he was strangely deficient in steadiness; and, notwithstanding the infinite painstaking of his worthy governor that, in the strange cities they visited, he should see all that was commendable, and know all concerning them that was worth the hearing, he would frequently give him the slip; and there was but too good reason for believing he would at that time be devoting his attention to objects the least likely to afford him any wholesome knowledge.

As his person and countenance were singularly well favored, and he dressed as became his birth, wherever he went, there was sure to be divers persons anxious to have him in their company, whose society could confer upon him little credit. There had been already more than sufficient evidence that the handsome English youth had attracted the attention of many beautiful signoras, who had the reputation of being as kind as fair; and at Naples the watchful governor had observed sufficient of the willingness of his charge to meet their advances, to make him hurry away with him to Rome.

Though the earnest affection with which Master Shakspere regarded him, from certain deep and powerful causes, might have led him to look on his faults with extreme leniency, the promise he had given to the noble lady, whose vowed servant he was, made him exceeding urgent in the proper discharge of his duty; and, fearing he might, if not properly cared for, fall into the hands of some base adventurers, whose fair visage and goodly person were always ready to be put out to pawn at most usurious interest, whereof the penalty was the monstrous infamy of the lender, he was wondrously anxious to save him from such snares.

But in this there was a difficulty of a

kind not easy to be got over. He cared not showing too open an interference with the youth's inclinations, as he knew it was like to be resented in such a manner—from his great pride and high-spiritedness—as would throw an insurmountable obstacle in the way of all further leading of him; or, governed by the excellent policy which says that "prevention is better than cure," he watched carefully and anxiously to keep out of his way the sort of dangers he had most fear of.

Rome he thought less dangerous than Naples, where the hearts of its fair inhabitants seemed akin with the combustible stuff on which that gay city is built; for the monuments of antiquity, and the associations connected with them, gave such abundant food for the mind, that there was scarce opportunity for it to turn for nourishment to those mischievous sources whose complexion he so hugely disliked. In this he judged by the influence of the place on himself.

He had been furnished with letters that insured him all manner of courtesies from the noblest families, and even obtained personal notice from the sovereign pontiff; but these flattering favors had far less attraction for him than a companionship with the mighty spirits whose tombs or favorite haunts he loved to explore. The charms of music and painting were placed before him in such perfectness as he had never known at any other time; but, deeply as his soul was moved at hearing the wondrous harmonies the Catholic Church so well knows how to use, and, as he stood entranced before the marvellous works of art which join their mighty forces in the same gorgeous service, to him there was a music far more touching in the pastoral sounds that enriched some of the many lovely landscapes the neighborhood affords, and his eye was fed continually wherever he went, with pictures painted with a truth, a force, and a beauty no mortal painter ever yet could boast of. The song of the herdsman or the muleteer, a chorus of vine-dressers, or the jingle of a rude gittara, to which a score or two of merry feet were tripping it in artless measure, had more charms for him than the sweetest airs of Palestrina; and a young girl offering her heartfelt devotions before a rude statue of the Virgin in one of the public streets, a sunset scene from the terrace of any of the suburban villas, or a moonlight on the Tiber, gave him scenes which neither Raphael, nor Titian, nor all the schools of Italy together, could ever come up to.

It was in that gigantic ruin, known as

the Coliseum, that Master Shakspeare, with his young charge, were standing, lost, as it were, in utter astonishment, with the faithful Simon in attendance, who, if one might judge from his looks, was in as huge a wonder as either. The sunlight streamed upon the desolate amphitheatre, investing its picturesque details with a beauty almost magical to look on. The eye of the poet regarded those broken arches with a double consciousness, the actual and the ideal: first it embraced the wondrous picture of desolation they presented—the stains of time, the rank verdure, and the influence of many centuries of neglect, laying on tints and perfecting forms that, combined, gave the image of antiquity in her most majestic garment; gradually this faded away, and the glorious fragments made one more glorious whole; and the wondrous wreck displayed a more marvellous perfectness.

Tier above tier became thronged with earnest, anxious countenances, in countless variety and with well-defined grade; the humble plebeian, the haughty patrician, and every class and dignity, from the most abject of the citizens up to the highest officer of the state—consul or emperor, as the case might be; whilst below, to whom the universal gaze was directed, there raged a fierce combat, perchance some of the very savagest denizens of the forest against each other—the fell rhinoceros, the cruel tiger, the raging lion, the terrible hippopotamus, and the majestic elephant; or mayhap, with one or other of these horrible monsters, a man should be matched, and so he dares the unequal combat, armed only with a short sword, whilst among the multitudinous host above there exists an awful silence, as deep as that of one in a trance. Or, it may be, public gladiators are set to try their strength and skill, among themselves, after divers fashions of fighting, and blood flows like water, and there is no lack of gaping wounds, crushed bones, and bruised limbs; and the shout of the spectators rises like a burst of mountain thunder, as he who hath the skill or good fortune to survive this monstrous butchery, steps forward the acknowledged victor of the day.

On this fantasy the mind of the poet lingered till all sense of existing things seemed absorbed, and all attention was concentrated upon this fearful leaf in the mighty volume of the past. How deeply his noble heart was touched by the outrage on humanity it so forcibly exhibited, abler pens than mine must seek to show. But to one taught in that most ancient of free schools, nature, the humiliating reflections which

could not but arise from it must have clothed his spirit with a bitterness the natural sweetness of his disposition could scarce render endurable.

For after the exulting mind has been tracing the imposing signs and tokens of Roman greatness, from what small beginnings a brave and enlightened people became great and free, triumphed over the barbarian, and, for his loss of freedom he knew not how to keep, conferred the blessings of civilization he would soon learn how to appreciate, how terrible is the shock that follows a closer inspection, when it is discovered that the cement which held together these immortal monuments is composed of the blood and tears of tortured and degraded manhood! Roman freedom, Roman greatness, Roman glory, raise them on their towering pedestals, and then, behold! the whole fabric is built up of the basest slavery, the vilest meanness, and the saddest degradation, that ever weighed down the aspiring soul of man since the gates of Eden were first closed against it.

On this theme the intelligent mind of Shakspeare was wondrous busy; and, after he had found sufficient entertainment in the impressions it received, he bethought him of his duty to his young companion, and addressed him in a marvellous moving speech, full of fine scholarship, and finer wisdom, touching the difference of false greatness and true; and, like another Cicero, he spoke high and learnedly, distinguishing the genuine claims the Romans have on the respect of posterity for the many signs that have been preserved of a surpassing intellect, from the fictitious demands that have been so prominently brought forward to obtain an immortal admiration, for causes purely physical.

Young Herbert listened as though he had forgot he was my Lord of Pembroke's heir, and, which was of no less consequence, as if he had not seen at Naples an exquisite fair face, that had haunted his young fancy with the glow of a perpetual sunrise. He was not entirely indifferent to the force of classic examples, and the scene and the sentiments that so naturally and forcibly arose out of it touched him somewhat.

He began to ask questions which, in the result, was like unto one beginning to dig in a soil abounding with treasures, every effort was so singularly productive of sterling truths: and, pleased with his acquisitions, he grew more inquisitive and more eager to obtain a greater sum of that profit which was repaying his exertions a hundred-fold. By his inquiries his governor

was led to draw a comparison between heathen and Christian Rome; between the Caesars of the one, and the Popes of the other; between the invincible arms of the Roman warrior, and the absolute ascendancy of the Romish priest; and, in the parallel, divers new and striking illustrations were produced. A family likeness seemed to run in the heathen Cæsar Caligula and the Holy Catholic Cæsar Borgia: a great similitude was shewed betwixt the superstitions of the classic soothsayer, and those of the Christian dispenser of Indulgences; and the same love of dominion, which arrayed the Roman phalanx against every appearance of independence in other countries, was proved to be observable in the policy which, from time to time, influenced the occupant of the papal chair in its relations with foreign states.

But here the parallel ended, and the most positive contrast commenced. The former trusted to obtain their ascendancy over the rest of the world by physical means, and conquered by force of arms; whilst the latter relied on a moral force only, as a means of subjection, and maintained a despotic sway over every part of the civilized globe by force of opinion.

Then the speaker went on to show that this opinion, in modern Rome, bore the name of religion, and it was produced in a manner best suited to answer its desired end. All things whatsoever that could most attract and subdue the senses, either as a source of gratification or one of fear, were pressed into the service of the successors of the ancient sovereigns of Rome. With this object, art was appealed to as an auxiliary of the most powerful character; and the painter, the sculptor, the architect, and the musician, were taught to put forth all their excellencies to assist in subduing the Catholic world. How ably they fulfilled the purport for which they were devoted, it did not require a journey to Rome to ascertain, though undoubtedly there it might be learned in more perfectness than elsewhere; and if the Julius Cæsars of the pontifical chair had been satisfied with an authority based on such means, they need not have been very harshly condemned; but they sought to establish a despotism with more exceptional weapons—the terrible thunders of the Vatican, the dreaded whispers of the Inquisition, torture, injustice, tyranny, and superstition, were employed upon human conscience, as with an intention of binding it forever in the humiliating bonds of credulity and ignorance; and then it became a

question whether the state of heathenism or Catholicism were the most desirable.

But, as Master Shakespeare eloquently proved, the parallel became again destroyed. The world grew more enlightened, and consequently less tolerant of mental bondage, and each succeeding century found modern Rome lessening its pretensions to a power equal to that which existed in the ancient city; and now it possesses neither mental nor physical energy sufficient to keep a creditable place among the states of the civilized world. An emasculated race, who are slaves to the most lamentable ignorance, pride and self-conceit, bear the dreaded name of the Conquerors of Carthage, and if any one individual, to whom it now belongs, obtaineth any sort of celebrity in foreign countries, you shall find him no greater character than a bigoted monk, who hath not a thought beyond his breviary; a skilful limner, whose whole soul is in his paint-pots; or a fair composer of madrigals, whose highest philosophy is drawn from an exact application of his *mi sol re*.

They have lost all that was Roman but the name—valor, glory, and all the nobler qualities of honorable manhood are departed; and in their place there is nought but the subtlety of the fox and the venom of the serpent—a fierce hatred of liberal thoughts and institutions—and the most degrading observance of solemn fooleries, unmeaning self-abasements, and contemptible deceptions.

But the utterer of these strictures was of too great a soul to omit the mention of what was in any way of a worthier nature than what hath just been set down, and he did ample justice to the piety, charity, humility, and wisdom that characterized many of these unwarlike descendants of the heroes of Roman history; nor did he pass over the merits of those illustrious men who had made Rome the metropolis of art. It cannot be supposed that he who was the first and noblest of artists should fail in appreciating those ideas of the grand and the beautiful which the Roman painters had expressed in such immortal characters, as in their frequent visits to the most famous galleries and churches of Rome, Master Herbert and his governor had witnessed; far from it—the latter showed how much more Catholic was the religion of Raffaelle than that of Leo; and how much nearer heaven were the labors of Michael Angelo and Sebastian del Piombo, than were those of the College of Cardinals, or the Society of Jesus.

If the palette, then, might be allowed to stand in place of the sword, the painters, at least, were worthy of their origin; and if the influence they maintained was peaceful, it was more valuable, pleasing, ennobling, and enduring, than that obtained by their ancestors with so vast a cost of injustice and bloodshed. They admirably upheld the honor of Rome—they had triumphs worthy of rivalry with any which were gloried in throughout the rejoicing streets of the ancient city—and they, be it remembered to their everlasting credit, had no Coliseum.

This was not uttered without some searching questions from the speaker's companion, who seemed to listen with more than ordinary attentiveness and satisfaction; but the humor was only a little less transient than usual, and as soon as his curiosity was sufficiently gratified, he moved off to where Simon Stockfish was reclining at his ease, diligently employed in providing for imaginary evils that *might* visit him, by subtle strokes of policy such as would do credit to the exceeding gravity of his turn of mind, and was soon deeply engaged, with the faithful old servitor, in carrying on some business of his own, as little creditable as profitable.

Whilst the youth was thus employed, his tutor returned to the luxury of his own thoughts, which, in the first moment of leisure, took the following complexion.

THE ADDRESS

OF A FAITHFUL SERVANT IN A FAR-OFF LAND
TO A MOST GRACIOUS MISTRESS.

The ever-rolling seas in vain divide

Two separate natures, such as do exist
In that pure shrine where thy fond wishes hide,
And this poor heart, who hath such 'vantage
miss'd;

For I thus differ from the egotist,
Who his dear self in ev'ry thing doth see—
Whatever I behold is full of thee.

Therefore, nor time, nor space, availeth much,
Thine image is so constant in mine eyes;
For here thou liv'st in ev'ry thing I touch:
I meet thy gaze in these Italian skies,
I hear thee in these glorious harmonies,
That fill with marvellous praise each holy place,
And find thy smile on each Madonna's face.

If from the presence of the Past I turn,
And live mid relics of an antique time,
Where temple, bust, or monumental urn,
Bring back the classic ages in all its prime,
In glory infinite, in grace sublime;
Go where I will, consider what I may,
Signs of thy nobleness start forth straightway.

Perchance, some crumbling column rears on high

The remnant of a glorious architrave;
Or matchless Torso 'witching every eye,
With shape such as God's noblest creatures
have,

Doth my especial wonder seem to crave—
Where 'tis most admirable there doth dwell
That quality in which thou dost excel.

But e'en the statue most divinely bright,
The proudest structure of our proudest days,
The fairest picture offered to man's sight;
In brief, whatever marvels art could raise,
Can never take one atom from thy praise.
There is no chance 'gainst such o'erwhelming odds—

They are man's masterpieces—thou art God's!

Yet in such perfectness as they possess,
For thee they bear triumphant evidence,
Which in my pleadings, dwelt on more or less,
So well establish-s thine excellence,
A verdict for thee must be drawn from
thence:

Making a precedent of such import,
Who deems it ill should be put out of court.

How then can I from thee be separate,
Did nought express a closer likelihood;
But when mine eyes take in thy goodly state,
Clothed with the tempting worth of flesh
and blood,
Of thee I am so thoroughly imbued,
So filled with thy sweet self, in heart and soul,
We stand confessed a just harmonious whole.

But were this but a shadowy fantasy,
Bred of th' imagination's rank conceits,
I should allow it here less readily.

The understanding no such mockery meets,
I see thee not in visionary cheats;
Thy honest, tangible, and ocular grace,
Presensit itself before me face to face.

Seeing thy living image, I enjoy
The profit of thy pleasant neighborhood,
And ev'ry step of time I do employ
In storing up the admirable good
Thou dost dispense in such a gracious mood:
I see thee, hear thee, touch thee, and from
thence
Sight, hearing, touch, assume a threefold sense.

But who shall set aside fate's stern decree?
Zenxis his painted grapes poor birds did not
More hugely disappoint than thou poor me
In the *fac-simile* which thou hast got;
Thou findest me a most unhappy lot;
Like him who sought a goddess, pressed a cloud,
I find the robe of Love become his shroud.

Cold slighting looks, and high and haughty
tones,
Indiff'rence rude, and careless disrespect,

Sharp questions, and some few uncivil ones,
And wild extravagances passed uncheck'd—
Tenants at will, that Time will soon eject;
These are but sorry solace for the lack
Of that which Memory only can bring back.

Yet hath that solace some sweet gift withal,
Some pleasant power, some profitable end;
The contention it affords is small.
Still doth it oft a wondrous comfort lend!
It speaks of that incomparable friend,
Whose image charges, whereso'er it lies,
Th' unkindest thoughts with kindliest properties.

Therefore can never obstacle divide,
Nor contrary thing oppose, nor time delay,
The sweet communion that must now abide
All tests, all chance, without change or decay.
That betwixt thee and I shall from this day
Live wheresoever I take up my rest,
Making the cursedest thing appear most blest.

One of those gorgeous assemblages of the countless religious orders that throng the Seven Hilled City had passed through its chief thoroughfare, with banners and crucifixes, and images, and proudly decorated prelates, and monks in humbler garb, but not less lofty spirit, and incense-bearers making the air rich with frankincense, and choristers filling it with stately harmony, which occasioned the assembling of vast numbers of idle Romans and curious strangers, who dropped on their knees as the procession passed, many of whom affected a marvellous degree of devotion and reverence, and others no small extent of surprise and wonder.

The chanting of the priests was beginning to be inaudible in the distance, when, in a certain open space, over which those holy men had passed, there was formed a circle of the good people who had but a moment since been so greatly edified by the impressive spectacle that had been presented to them, who were as busily engaged in regarding the graceful attitudes and marvellous tricks of a party of Bohemian dancers and jugglers, as though the sight had clean put out of their mind the sacred one which had immediately preceded it. Of the exhibitors there were two men of monstrous sinister-looking aspect, who flung brazen balls into the air, and sharp-pointed daggers, one after another, and did catch them with a dexterity that was a wonder to behold.

Their audience looked on as much amazed as delighted. Presently one took to swallowing a sword, and the other to eating fire, as though he were a salamander, and the faces of all present seemed bewildered with the beholding of sights so strange. Anon

one seized a rude chair, strong and heavy, and seated on it a young boy of their company, exceedingly well favored, though he had a roguish look withal, then placed it on his head, balanced on one leg, where he kept it as he walked about, picking up a certain number of eggs from the ground, the boy the whilst looking about him unconcernedly cracking of nuts, as though he had the securest seat in the world. After this he took his comrade by a linen fastening round his loins, and fixed it between his teeth, and so carried him round the circle. These tricks were also regarded with the hugest astonishment.

But the most pleasing sight of all, was a woman of the same company, of a beauty the most ravishing eye ever dwelt upon, and attired very temptingly after the Moorish fashion, who, to the accompaniment of a small drum decorated with silver bells, which she struck and shook, and cast about her in every graceful motion, danced the Romalis or gipsy dance in so moving a fashion, that the gazer seemed to look on in a manner entranced. Truly the swimming eyes and pouting mouth, and the eloquent motions of the Bohemian, were enough to warm the current of a man's blood had it flowed less sluggishly than it doth in Italian veins.

There was in her appearance such a mingling of the ripe Hebe with the joyous Bacchante, that a Roman, even of the classic age, would have felt her influence. Her dance was a sort of hymn in motion—an invocation in pantomime to the winged urchin, who, with his marvellous keen arrows, is wont to cause such sharp wounds in every one that hath part and parcel with humanity—in the which every twirl, and every bend of that voluptuous body, every wave of those delicate arms, every spring of those elastic feet, each glance of those subduing eyes, and each smile from that provoking mouth, were examples of poetical meaning, such as even the rarest masters of the poet's craft seldom reach. There seemed an intense ecstasy of animal enjoyment breathing all around and about her, evident not only in the flashing of her soft dark eyes, but in the saucy wantonness of her raven hair, and in the expressive buoyancy of her most seductive limbs.

Perchance the reader would fain have some acquaintance with this very delectable, sweet creature, but he must needs here be reminded that she is not so complete a stranger to him as it would appear; he having already enjoyed the exquisite pleasure of her company, when our grave young stu-

dent of medicine, John Hall, and his polite serving-man, Simon Stockfish, were, hugely against their wills, made inmates of a gipsy encampment, when on their way to London.

In sober honesty, this wondrous dancer in the public streets of Rome was no other than the very youthful companion of Black Sampson, as he was then called, the king of such of the wandering outlaws as were to be found in England; and the strong, sturdy-looking urchin, who so bravely looked from his perilous seat, was the same admirable fair child for whose existence she felt herself so deeply indebted to the skill of our young physician.

The life of this matchless dancer had been at every step the sport of fortune—she had gone through numberless adventures of the most extraordinary character. It was believed, when very young, she had been found in a Moorish barge, that had been captured on the coast of Barbary, by the crew of a Spanish ship, the captain of which had sold her to an ancient grandee, who had her taught all feminine accomplishments, and brought her up in the closest, strictest retirement, in a strong castle in Andalusia. All went on fairly enough with the Don, till about thirteen or fourteen years of age, the ripening beauty of his interesting purchase induced him to double his attentions, and treble his vigilance. The old gallant strove earnestly to win his way to her heart; and just as he was beginning to congratulate himself on the favorable result of his exertions, the astounding intelligence was conveyed to him that the incomparable Dona Xariqua was nowhere to be found.

Whether he hanged the Duenna who had charge of her is not known, but certain it is, that, whilst he was employing his vast resources to recover what he considered a treasure far more valuable, she was being conveyed from the nearest port, in the good ship, "Endeavor," of Bristol, by a famous tall, well-favored young fellow, that looked a prince at the least, and this he was most assuredly, for he was a prince at the least sort of estimation.

He belonged to the royal tribe existing amongst that wandering people, so generally spread over Europe, under the several names of Bohemians, Roumanee, Egyptians, gypsies, and Zincali; and, though born and brought up in England, he had joined some daring smugglers on the coast, who traded with Spain. Whilst pursuing his adventures in the country, he had got sight of the Don's destined mistress, and, struck with her exceeding loveliness, had, in a manner

no less daring than ingenious, carried her off from the garden of the castle. It must be acknowledged, that the youthful, nay, almost childish Xariqua, got wonderfully soon reconciled to the change, from a particularly crabbed, ill-favored old lover, to one as remarkably young and comely; and on their landing in England, she made no objection to be married to him, according to the ceremonies of his tribe, to which about the same time he was elected to be king, in consequence of the decease of his predecessor in the royal dignity, in a somewhat unregular way at Tyburn.

She soon made herself mistress of the arts and mysteries practised by the females of the strange people with whom her life was now to be passed; and, though her partner, from the violence of his passions, did not make her the best of husbands, she made him a model of a perfect good wife down to the very day of his so terrible death, sharing in all the hazards of his dangerous way of living with a fearlessness and devotion worthy of a better object. After she was left a widow, still young, still of ravishing loveliness, she was prevailed on to turn her attractions and the accomplishments she had been taught, to some account. Therefore, she made part of an exhibition which certain of the Bohemians got up about this time, and acted from town to town, whilst their equally active confederates contrived to ease the wondering spectators of whatever valuables they had about them that were accessible to their light fingers.

As her charms were set off to the greatest advantage by her picturesque dress, and her dancing was exceedingly animated and graceful, after the Bohemian fashion, wherever she appeared she gained no lack of admirers, on whom she never failed to levy contributions, often gaining from them something additional by practising for their edification the science of palmistry.

La Xariqua became celebrated, throughout more than one of the Italian states; and her witcheries turned the heads of all the gallants, and also of men of graver sort, who might be expected to have been insensible of such follies. Rumors on this point had got abroad, to the prejudice of divers holy fathers of the church, which had, moreover, come to the ears of their superiors, who, though they looked to be horribly shocked at such scandals, were secretly as much enamored of the beautiful Bohemian as their humbler brethren. Her appearance in the Holy City caused quite a stir, both amongst clergy and laity; and although, generally, she was spoken of as a creature

worthy to be worshipped of all men living, it chanced that she was made the subject of comment in another and totally different quarter, which boded her no good.

Among the most enraptured of those whom she had gathered round her in Rome at this time was a youth, who looked on with all his soul in his eyes, to appearance fairly bewitched by a scene so exquisitely seductive. The emotion he exhibited did not escape the brilliant eyes of the dancer—neither did his noble visage and admirably formed figure; for, from beneath her long, dark lashes she ever and anon shot at him such glances as set his heart in a flame in a presently.

It so chanced, during the performance of the Romalis, that she was exerting herself to the very utmost to outstrip all she had previously done, and the admiration of the surrounding crowd approached to a frenzy; the enticing scene was put a stop to by the sudden apparition of two mysterious figures in sombre robes that entirely enveloped their persons, who pushed through the circle, in which, with looks of mingled awe and terror, all fell back. They made their way to the fascinating Bohemian, whom each seized by an arm, and placing the fore-finger mysteriously on the lip, began to drag her away. At seeing this, all her enraptured admirers slunk away in every direction, without daring so much as to look behind them, and none seemed inclined to stay, save a few ill-looking knaves, who, out of all doubt, were her companions, and the youth whose intoxicating dream had been so rudely disturbed. He seemed at first to marvel hugely at the appearance of the two mysterious figures, taking it to be a part of the performance; but when the cries and struggles of the dancer convinced him her seizure was an act of violence, his rapier flew out of his scabbard on the instant.

The crowd had by this time entirely disappeared. The youth rushed after the struggling Xariqua, sharply calling on those who were hurrying her along to loose their hold of her if they desired to live. They paid no manner of heed to him, but continued to hurry away their terrified prisoner. He was upon them sword in hand, when from a neighboring portal, there came upon him unawares two or three armed men, by whom he would infallibly have been slain or taken captive, had it not happened, that almost as quickly after rushed hastily, from an opposite direction, a gallant, who ranged himself on his side. The contest lasted not long, for the Bohemians, with weapons of various sorts, so bestirred themselves, that

the beginners of the fray were speedily either stretched on the ground with grievous wounds, or running for their lives with what speed of foot they had. La Xariqua was rescued out of their hands, and soon, by the contrivance of her associates, beyond all fear of recapture.

It was but a short hour after this occurrence that the youth, and the friend who had come to his assistance, were with a single attendant, pursuing their way out of Rome as fast as fleet horses could carry them. The younger of the two was no other than the Earl of Pembroke's heir, who had given his companion the slip whilst examining some of the many marvels of the City of the Cæsars; and the other was, of course, his worthy governor, who, as he came upon the spot, and beheld the danger with which his charge was menaced, could do no less than hasten to his assistance. But when he came to learn, as he shortly did, that Master Herbert had provoked an attack from the Pope's guards, by endeavoring to rescue a sorceress, then in charge of the messengers of the Holy Office, he knew there was no longer any safety for either of them within the Papal States.

CHAPTER XXV.

And with that word she smiled, and ne'ertheless

Her love-toys still she used, and pleasures bold.

FAIRFAX.

THE treacherous Millicent, by the exercise of that craft with which she was so eminently gifted, was now in a fair way of seeing all things settled as she would have them. She persuaded her young friend and confidant that the desirablest thing on earth would be a marriage with her father; and, by dint of working on her vanity and pride, of which she had no slight share, got her to see, in a union with one thrice her age, only famous braveries, money at command, and the covetable situation of mistress of a fine mansion. Her consent was obtained, and a day fixed for this May and December union; when it was also settled should take place the marriage of Millicent and Leonard.

At first, when his mistress urged him to complete his contract with her, for which she failed not to give him good and sufficient reasons, he seemed somewhat taken by surprise, as not only had he long given up all idea of such a thing, but he had seen what

had assured him of his fellow-student's attachment, whose true friend he held himself at this time, and would have been right glad to have furthered his happiness in any honest way. This friendly inclination of her destined husband towards her lover it was her policy now to destroy, as she saw it would be a serious obstacle in the way of the success of her fine scheming; whereupon she set about to poison his mind with dark hints and discreditable insinuations of and concerning his friend's integrity, and, to give sufficient color to these, she read letters from John Hall to herself, which proved incontestibly that he was not such as he took him to be.

Concerning of these letters it is sufficient here to state, that, though Leonard was allowed to recognize the handwriting, he had no means of comparing the passages read with what was written, and entertaining no suspicion of deceit, it is not surprising that she should easily have passed off on him what was entirely her own invention, for the handwriting of John Hall.

Leonard had nothing for it but to fall into the humor of one whom he had allowed to govern him as she listed. Yet it was long before he could reconcile himself to what he looked on as the violent extinguishing of his fellow-student's happiness. In due time, by the constant artifices of the crafty Millicent, the estrangement was complete. Leonard's habitual indolence and indecision were taken advantage of, and John Hall every day became less and less cared for. Indeed, as it usually happens with those who wrong their fellows, Leonard felt disposed ere long to look on John Hall as one possessed of the absolutest unworthiness ever heard of.

But how fared the young physician all this while? How took he the intelligence his mistress artfully conveyed to him of her being forced against her wish to complete the betrothal of so long standing? Of a truth it came on him like a thunder-clap. He had allowed himself so completely, in consequence of her conduct to him, to lose sight of any such engagement, that he could not now be brought to tolerate it in any manner. It was a most moving sight to see the tears which chased down her cheeks, and the passionate fondness of her bearing and language, when this accomplished dissembler informed her lover of her father's tyranny in insisting upon her immediate marriage with one she liked not.

No man who has ever devotedly loved could reconcile himself to another's possessing his mistress; and the heart of John Hall

was too completely given up to the seductive Millicent to be easily drawn into an abandonment of his claim upon her. Her representations were marvellous powerful, and his nature was exceeding yielding. Nevertheless, though he did not in any way dispute the marriage, in heart and soul he loathed and detested it.

From the first hour he heard of the arrangement he became a different being. A slow, consuming fever preyed upon him—his flesh fell away—he could endure no employment—he could enjoy no gratification. He confined himself to his own chamber, where, hour after hour, he sat at the table with an open book before him; but the page was never turned, and, though the eyes dwelt on it, they took in nothing of its meaning. His thoughts were directed elsewhere, but kept themselves to a most contracted circle; for, oppressed by a sense of his own misery, they seemed to have no energy to get beyond it.

Thus, day after day passed by, he getting weaker and weaker, his cheek more transparent, his look more haggard, and a settled despair seemed stamped upon his visage, with a sharpness that expressed death in every line. No one came near him but Millicent, who used some arguments to console him, but they were not understood; and, if they had been, they would not have afforded the sufferer any consolation; and, the caresses she continued to heap upon him he received as one in a delirium takes a drug that is to give him present composure.

The night before the wedding-day arrived, and whether her bad heart was touched by the youth's uncomplaining but most eloquent misery, or she had a bad purpose in view, in which her heart was not concerned, is not known; but, most assuredly, she sat up the whole of that night with him: all which time, by every word and deed most convincing, she let him know that he was beloved by her as no other ever could be. He seemed moved by her affectionateness, and clung to it with all the wild fervor of one who knows he hath before him his only stay. The excitement which this produced became at last two powerful for his enfeebled frame, and, towards morning, he sunk into a stupor.

It was full noon, on that eventful day, before the unhappy youth recovered to a perfect consciousness. He felt more than ordinarily weak and feeble, but he mechanically rose and made his morning toilet as usual. He noticed that his customary breakfast was prepared for him, but he touched it not. He went to the casement,

and marvelled greatly to see, by the shadow of the sun on the opposite house how late it was in the day.

His thoughts were strange and disconnected. Now he was with his mother in the home of his childhood, hearkening to her sweet counsel; anon, he was engaged with such profitable company as Celsus and Hippocrates, in the familiar seat under the old walnut tree; in a moment he was in the tent of the gipsy girl, restoring her child to life, and directly after he was no less delightfully listening to Master Shakspere's admirable converse in his well-remembered lodging in the Clink Liberty.

In short, his thoughts went from one thing to another with no settled purpose, travelling hither and thither, yet carefully avoiding home. He dared not think of *her*. He strove all in his power to avoid recalling to his mind anything which would bring the business of this intolerable day before him. Nevertheless, do what he would, he frequently found himself approaching the dreaded subject. He walked about his chamber, counting his strides as he proceeded; and when he tired of that, he leaned out of the casement and watched the sparrow flitting about the eaves, and the smoke of the chimneys curling up till it disappeared in the blue sky.

The day seemed to be of a monstrous length. He ardently longed for it to end, but every minute had to him the duration of the most tedious hours. He was struck with the extraordinary quietness of the house. In directing his attention to this, the knowledge of why it was so rushed upon him with a force that overthrew all his precautions. Millicent was gone to church!—by this time she was another's! and doubtless they were all making merry every one with another; and while he was in the extremity of his misery, hovering over the brink of very madness, the more fortunate Leonard was —

As his mind caught a glimpse of the exquisite sweet happiness of his rival, there seemed to him to come a sudden whirlwind, which crushed the walls of the chamber in upon him on every side, and making a feeble clutch at the chair on which he had been leaning, he fell in a deadly swoon on the floor.

How long he remained in this state he never knew, for several weeks elapsed before he recovered the faculties of a reasoning being, and then he was lying on his pallet as feeble as a child, with an entire oblivion of all that had been done to him during that interval, and all the wild rav-

ings and monstrous extravagances he had then exhibited. But he had not been discovered till, on the return of the wedding-party from their day's pleasureing, Millicent stole up to his chamber hurriedly.

If ever contrition touched her cold, selfish heart, one would have fancied it would have been now; but her sole object was her own security, and for this only she looked to his wants, and nursed him throughout his disorder. She feared that, despite her fine scheming, her treachery might be made visible, and albeit her influence over her new made husband was none of the weakest, it was possible a knowledge of her infamous behavior he might receive in a fashion little to her liking. She obtained assistance in which she could trust, and the malady of John Hall began at last to assume a more favorable character.

In especial, the young stepmother of his treacherous, false mistress, was untiring in her attentions, and showed a more than ordinary kindness in every thing she did. He felt gratefully disposed towards her, for her exceeding friendliness at such a time, and, noting his thankfulness, set her to make herself still more agreeable. She had, by this time, learned the true value of the position into which she had been cajoled—she saw the sacrifice that had been made of her—and was at no loss to discover for whose sole advantage she had been thus infamously bartered. Her mind was of a most limited capacity, but it was large enough for vengeance, and it became the business of her life to study some sure way of obtaining it.

She sympathised with him, and denounced the unprincipled conduct of her quondam friend, whose whole proceedings she gradually placed before him in their proper light. He shrank from believing her statements, but she returned again and again to the charge, supporting her accusations by proofs there was no questioning.

Loath as the lover always is to believe ill of the woman he loves, he cannot resist, for any long time, insurmountable evidence, unless he be wilfully blind. Our young physician was wondrously moved at the information he had received, and felt much inclined to upbraid the crafty Millicent for the infamousness of her proceedings; but, on her next making her appearance, the consummate hypocrisy of her bearing, and the influence of old impressions, drove him from his purpose, and he let her take her departure as though she were still the matchless, spotless, admirable fond creature he had so long been used to consider her. But when she was gone, and her confidante

returned to him with fresh instances of her falsehood, he again resolved to charge her with it, and break off all intimacy for the future.

He was now sufficiently recovered to leave his chamber; and, as he had of late been schooling himself to meet the woman of whom he had been so enamored, in company, with a sufficient indifference, he resolved to have his meals on a certain day with the family, as had been his wont before his illness. He presented himself at his customary place, and, though feeling horribly restless and uneasy, he received the general congratulations upon his recovery without much embarrassment. He took his seat. Towards her he dared not look; but he felt she was sitting over-against him. Her husband, to his great relief, was absent, and not expected to return till late.

The meal passed off without anything worthy of notice, save that old Posset strove to show himself in the character of a jester; but his was the facetiousness of a grinning skeleton. Nevertheless, his daughter encouraged his humor, and seemed, to the unhappy student, to have an extraordinary flow of spirits. He could not fail of drawing some comparisons between her now ever ready mirth and her constant affectionation of wretchedness a few short months before.

The dinner had all been removed, and the master of the house had brewed a pot of sack, which was poured out in glasses for the company. Millicent had hardly got hers in her hand, when, in a manner half of carelessness and half of spite, she addressed every one in turn, and wished them something which had much the appearance of being what was least desired. John Hall was left by her to the last, when she commenced a speech to him in the same strain, in ambiguous phrase, but sufficiently apparent to all present. She alluded to his ill-placed passion, and wished him, as the best thing that could be had for him, *forgetfulness*. This was too much for the miserable lover; his pride revolted at thus being openly pointed out as the sufferer he was, but the blow was one he could not ward off or withstand. He felt the corners of the room whirling round, and, for some seconds, he lost all consciousness of what or where he was.

It chanced that, just at this time, word was brought that one badly wounded in a scuffle was waiting to have his hurts dressed, which instantly caused the room to be emptied of all but Millicent and John Hall. The former, for some motive or other, left

her place, and came round to him, when she presently put her arm round his neck, as of old. "Take not this accursed marriage of mine so much to heart, my sweet lie!" whispered she in his ear very lovingly. "I need thy behavior, and thou shalt profit by it to thy exceeding contention. For now such can be done safely which—"

John Hall locked in her face with a sort of bewildered stare, every vein and artery throbbing as though they would burst. He could scarce believe his ears, which had conveyed to him a meaning which seemed to have turned him to a mass of fire; but the gaze that met his own there could be no doubt; his eyes had fallen before its too obvious expression once before; albeit, now the villainy of it came to him so glaringly, that his whole soul revolted at its baseness, and he forcibly pushed her from him.

Whilst he buried his face in his hands, he saw nothing of the horrible, fiendish scowl with which the spurned tempter gazed upon him. The comely face was distorted out of all likeness with humanity; it was spectral, Medusa-like, and devilish, beyond all expression. In a short time it returned to its ordinary expression—nay, was more smiling than it had ever been, and Millicent spoke in the light manner she had a moment since, as if nothing had occurred to change her humor. When he found himself strong enough, the young student staggered out of the room, and was soon in the privacy of his own chamber. Here he had full leisure to think over the unquestionable evidence he had just obtained of the worthless nature of the woman he had so distractedly loved. Had the testimony come from any other source, he might have entertained a doubt, but, proceeding as it did from her own polluted lips, it carried with it a terrible conviction. A sensitive nature and a pure mind, that have remained for a long period in the most blessed conviction that the fair creature for whom all their best energies were devoted, was the one rare example of perfect excellence the world possessed, discovering, of a sudden, that she is among the very vilest of her sex, can scarce fail of receiving a shock likely to unsettle his whole being. He who truly loves, loves only in the impression of his mistress's superiority in all worthiness—this conviction is to his passion air, and food, and raiment; this it is that leadeth him to adoration, this it is that speaketh for him in song: but it hath more than once been, that this fair seeming hath been only the fruit of a much-studied hypocrisy, and that under the outer semblance of such great

goodness there existed unparalleled baseness; and such was it, beyond all manner of doubt, in the case of this unnatural false Jezebel.

Our young student was sorely troubled in mind; but he saw there was for him but one measure, which was a proper schooling of himself to regard the tempter in the light she ought only to be looked upon by him; and, strengthening his heart with divers wholesome resolutions, he succeeded at last in quieting his disturbed nature somewhat. He called to mind his mother's tender warnings, and these and other goodly recollections of the admirable principles she had taken such infinite pains to implant into him, did strengthen and encourage him wonderfully.

It was a little after midnight on the same evening that Millicent left her sleeping husband, and, wrapping herself in a loose gown, stealthily and silently crept down stairs. Having provided herself with a lighted lamp from the kitchen, she proceeded to the little back chamber described in a preceding chapter, as one where Master Doctor Posset was wont to enjoy his privacy unmolested by any save his daughter, the door of which she unlocked with a key she took from her girdle; then entering she locked herself in. Placing the lamp on the table, she went immediately to the old cabinet, which she opened with another key. The doors thrown back discovered nests of drawers, save at the top which looked to be blank; but Millicent, touching a secret spring, the panel slid on one side, and there appeared several curiously-shaped little bottles, some with powders, and some with liquids.

She opened one of the drawers, and took from thence a pair of ivory scales with divers small weights; from another she took a graduated glass measure; from a third a pestle and mortar of the same material. These she carefully placed on the table without noise; then took several of the bottles, and weighed and measured their contents in certain quantities, and mixed them in the mortar.

Whilst this was being done, it was curious to notice the dull, unearthly expression which pervaded her visage. Her sallow cheek was more bloodless than ever; her eyes seemed covered with a dead glaze; and her lips were of a livid tinge, and firmly compressed. Once or twice she looked as though she smiled, but it was a smile of such a sort as might have become a corpse, raised to life by some awful deed of sorcery. At length, at a sudden noise being heard, she suspended her operations, shaded

the lamp by interposing her handkerchief between it and the door, held her breath, and glared, listening with a terrible attentiveness, with an aspect that seemed to have the fearful power of blasting the sight of any too curious looker-on. All was still again, and she resumed her work with the cold, inhuman visage with which she had commenced it.

The mixture was at last completed, and secured in a vial, and the vessels which had been used were each separately washed and dried, and put with the rest of the things in their proper places. The panel was then returned to its place, and the cabinet locked; and the lamp was held close before the table, and then to the floor, to see that nothing had fallen which could show any one had been in that chamber. Having sufficiently satisfied herself in this respect, she took the vial and the lamp, and, carefully locking the door of the room after her, blew out the light, replaced it in the kitchen, and then cautiously returned to her own chamber.

John Hall awoke much weaker in body than he had been the day before at the same time. As he dressed himself, he again reflected on the incident of the previous day, and he came to a determination of renewing those studies that had been so completely interrupted by the violence of his passion. In accordance with this very admirable resolution, he looked to his favorite books with which he seemed to return with a new relish. But he was not in a condition for any serious study—the task soon became irksome to him, and despite of his inclination to continue at it, he more than once found himself indulging in his old habit of dreamy reveries, instead of directing his attention to the page before him.

To his infinite wonderment and no small confusion, the person of all others he wished least to see entered the room. He would gladly have told her he desired not her company; but there was such a winning cheerfulness in her manner, and such an impressive kindness in her language, that any repulse on his part would appear a rudeness there seemed no warrant for his shewing. She had brought with her a basin of strengthening broth, which she had made, as she said, expressly for the perfect healing of his sickness—for she had determined to take his cure into her own hand—and she continued to converse with so graceful a modesty, and so admirable a good humor, that he could not help coming to some doubts he had understood her rightly in her behavior to him the previous day.

The end was, that he allowed himself to

be persuaded by her of the restorative qualities of the broth, and was content to make trial of its effects. She insisted she would see him take it, as was the duty of a good nurse, and so he fell into her humor, and straightway began to do as she would have him.

The broth seemed of especial excellence, and cunningly compounded, as she said, of certain rare herbs. He commended its savor, and was content she should concoct the same mess for him every day till he recovered. Several days passed, and she came regularly at the same hour, and behaved in the like commendable fashion, always overflowing, as it were, with good-humor, gentleness, and the tenderest sympathy. Nevertheless, for all her friendly care, he felt himself getting much worse, and in a manner for which, with all his skill in medicine, he could not account. His pulse was sinking, his mouth was parched with an ill taste, his head ached strangely, he had racking internal pains, and his limbs could scarce support his body. His new nurse, hearing these symptoms, made light of them, and still maintained her restorative broth should work his speedy cure. This while he saw no one else but Millicent, for she had taken especial pains to keep every one out of the way.

His pains were getting to be so great, and his feebleness so to increase, that he began to think his ease needed the most skilful physician he could find; and on this point he spoke seriously to his attendant, but she treated his fears as proceeding only from lowness of spirits, which would leave him in a day or two, and pressed on him her restorative broth as an unquestionable remedy.

It had been her practice every day to stay in the room whilst her patient swallowed the broth, and she would never be satisfied till he had drank it all. It so happened on one occasion she was suddenly called away very urgently when he had about half finished it, and, not feeling disposed to take any more, John Hall put the basin on the ground before a favorite little spaniel that usually accompanied Millicent in her visits. The dog, nothing loath, licked it up every drop; but, scarcely had he done so, when he began to appear exceeding restless and uneasy. Presently he whined very pitifully, and ran round the chamber with his tongue out of his mouth, looking terribly disturbed. Anon he stopped, and straightway twisted himself about, and writhed and rolled, howling wildly, and foaming at the mouth as though in a monstrous agony.

John Hall gazed on the poor animal in a strange amazement and alarm. At first he was fain to believe he might be taken with a sudden fit; but when he beheld the evident torture he endured, and saw too plainly he was dying a terrible death, he was bewildered and astounded with his own thoughts. The symptoms were undoubtedly those which arise from the taking of poison; this poison could only have been in the broth he had just swallowed; and, if the broth had been mixed with any poisonous stuff, it was such as he had been taking for several days.

A horrible conviction came upon him, and he gasped for breath as he entertained it. He had been daily taking the broth, and had been daily getting into a state like one who may be said to be dying by inches.

At this moment the dog uttered a piercing howl, and gave up the ghost, and John Hall sank, sick unto death, into the highest chair.

He was, however, roused from the stupor that was coming over him by the return of Millicent, and, making a desperate effort as he clung to the back of the chair for support, he hurriedly related the awful sight he had just witnessed, and, in a few and incoherent words, accused her of attempting his life by daily administering some noxious ingredient. As, with looks of horror and alarm, he gazed upon her visage, he was struck by the ghastly paleness which instantly overspread it, and the shrinking eye, quivering lip, and trembling form, were alone sufficient evidence of her atrocious guilt.

Where was the matchless hypocrisy, the subtle craft, the wondrous readiness of deception that had so often served her in times of peril? Where were her tricks, and glozings, and cheats she had in such infinite abundance at her commandment? Had the ample magazine of her artifices been so exhausted, there was no lie left, no deceit practicable, no treachery at command, by which she could move the foul suspicion which every moment grew more black against her?

A few seconds of horrible silence followed, which the young student at last broke, as with a superhuman energy. Catching his breath with a sharp guttural spasm, in a voice scarcely audible for its hoarseness, he bade her "Begone!" The wretch obeyed, cowed as it were by the suddenness of the discovery of her dannable villainousness, and retired as quickly as she could—perchance to devise means of practising upon her victim more effectually.

But, scarce had the door closed upon her, when John Hall started up with frantic eagerness, hurried down stairs, and rushed out of the house, with the fullest determination never to enter those accursed doors again.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Then the Soldier

* * * * *

Seeking the bubble reputation,
Even in the cannon's mouth.

SHAKSREARE.

THE state of Venice had been famed for the vigor wherewith it had in times passed carried on war against the Ottoman; and, although years had gone by since any distinguishing victory had brought honor to the arms of this renowned republic, there were not wanting, either amongst her hardy gondoliers, her skilful artificers, or prodigal young nobles, spirits as ready to rally round the glorious banner of St. Mark, as when defended by the most heroic of her doges, it was planted on the walls of the capital of the western world.

The winged lion, though far less prominent in the war of Christian chivalry against the turbaned infidel, than in the time-honored days of the worthies of her golden book, had not yet learned to live in inglorious peace with the ancient enemy of its protectors, and both by land and sea, had, with scarce any intermissions, looked over battles and skirmishings, as varying in their natures as in their fortunes. Sometimes both Venetians and Turks carried on their enduring contest in places as remote from the natural home of the one as of the other, and upon an occasion armaments would be fitted out by either power to invade the dominions of the other; but, wherever they might chance to meet, this was certain, that very pretty fighting would soon follow, which was thought so attractive a matter to divers of the restless bold hearts of the more peaceful kingdoms of Europe, that they liked nothing so much as to serve a campaign or so under the Venetian commanders.

It chanced that the whole senate of Venice became thrown into a sudden commotion by the intelligence that a powerful body of Turks had contrived to land, and take by surprise a small place in the Venetian territory, which it was said they had entrenched, as though with a view to retain. Measures, however, were promptly taken to dispossess them of their conquest,

and the warlike citizens of the republic, inflamed by the rumors of their unfortunate countrymen taken prisoners only to be sold as slaves, thronged to the ships that were to transport them to the spot they intended to signalize by the punishment of their audacious enemy, and the deliverance of their pining friends. I would I might, with a proper convenience of this, my story, here tell the godly show of weapons, the famous display of armor, and the no less admirable array of all other proper munitions of war, that gave such a brave appearance to the lagunes; but I must for certain good and proper reasons at once transport the reader to the camp of the Venetians, a brief space only before they assaulted the position the Turks had taken, and seemed ready enough to defend.

The two armies lay in sight of each other, the Ottomans on a hill over-against the little town, above which their standards still proudly waved. Afar off was the sea, with the Turkish fleet hotly engaged with the ships of Venice, which, having put ashore the force intended to operate against their enemies on the land, had sailed to destroy their vessels, and so prevent their escaping by sea.

The town seemed to be defended with no lack of military skill, but the principal reliance of the infidels looked to be a battery of six petards, which already began to pour forth its murderous fire as the front columns of the Venetians approached with trumpets blowing and banners flying to begin the combat. The whole army of the republic was in motion; and it was at this period, just as their general, surrounded by his ablest captains, had given his last orders for the disposition of his forces, an ancient approached, and with a vast show of respect and reverence, delivered certain papers into his hands. The general was a veteran, tall, stately, and severe of aspect, who, it was easy to see, had fought under the banner of St. Mark, for some two score years at least. He was splendidly apparelled in the picturesque Venetian habit, which lost nothing of its state by being seen on his commanding figure. In brief, he was just that manner of man whereof the skilful limning of Titian hath given such admirable examples.

Taking the papers into his hands, he broke the seals, and read them attentively, and with visable appearance of interest. This done, he addressed himself to the bearer, and said, in an audible sonorous voice:—"Let them enter." Straightway the officer made his obedience, and departed

thence; presently, however, returning, accompanied by two persons, whom he announced as "the Signor Shakspae, and the Signor Guglielmo Erberto, Cavalieri Inglese." The different captains looked on the strangers with a pleased curiosness, for there was that in both that did as well become as bespeak the soldier. The captain-general gazed from one to the other as they saluted him, and, if satisfied with the fiery valor that shone in the glances of the younger of the two, his eyes rested with no less approval on the steady resolution that was as plunly to be seen in the graver aspect of the senior. Him he addressed,

"I have read with very singular satisfaction, Signor," said he with exceeding graciousness of manner, "these letters from certain honorable Councillors of State, in Venice, my assured friends, stating your desire to serve with your young companion, under my command, and urgently recommending you both, as persons of consideration and worship, to my countenance and favor. Signor, I am right glad to please the state—and am well content to have any of your honorable nation to be my good comrades in this campaign. By the favor of God and St. Mark, I will anon give you such opportunity of displaying your noble valor against the infidel as I doubt not will be greatly to your contentation."

"Da Ponte!" he exclaimed, to a young soldier of the group around him, "take these worthy cavaliers to be of your company, and with all dispatch join the division now marching against the enemy's centre; and, gentlemen," he added, to the others, "we will all, an it please you to our several posts."

Thereupon there was a stir among that warlike assembly—each hurried away to his company, or to perform such duty as had been previously assigned him—sounds of command were heard in all directions—trumpets were blown and drums beat: the general mounted a charger richly caparisoned, and with several of his captains about him, galloped off; and my Lord of Penbroke's heir and his estimable governor found themselves, in a few minutes' space, marching in the midst of a well-appointed body of Venetian soldiers, directly in front of the enemy's position.

At this time, the loud report of the great guns, and a scattered firing of matchlocks, told that some of the advanced parties were already engaged with the Turks: but it was not till the armies approached each other more nearly that the contest became general, and then it began to wax fiercer and

fiercer every instant—for both were inflamed with religious zeal, and a national animosity that had endured for many generations.

The bravery of silken scarfs, embroidered vestments, rich banners, gorgeous turbans, cosy arms and armor, that figured in that battle-field exceedeth belief, and when the smoke cleared away from any part, it was like unto a curtain rising above some matchless picture, glowing with all the deepest colors of the painter's art.

The infidels had something besides fanaticism and hatred to urge them to make a stiff fight of it, for they were well aware that, unless they beat off their assailants, their case was desperate indeed. What success their fleet met with, they could have no knowledge of, but they saw it was in vain to look there for assistance at that time. Therefore, they encouraged each other with their warlike cries, and rushed forward with shouts in praise of their prophet, and execrations against "the Christian dogs," with whom they were so eager to engage in deadly battle.

Master Shakspare, in availing himself of that favorable opportunity to obtain for his beloved scholar the prized accomplishments of a soldier, had not done so without some inward strife with himself. All the earnest deep passion he had so long yet secretly felt for the noble mother, he had gradually transferred to her high-spirited son, as her representative and perfect image; to the lawfulness of which he had succeeded in reconciling himself, though he was as zealously intent as ever in concealing from its object the influence by which his feelings were ever directed towards him.

Moreover, he had more than one reason for directing his steps towards the Venetian camp, not the least pressing of which was the necessity there existed of removing his charge, where pressing duties and constant action would destroy a degrading entanglement he had watched with solitude, and had in vain by other means endeavored to destroy. The youthful lover would needs be his own judge in the correctness of such matters, and like a fiery horse would rush into the horriblest mischief were any rude means employed to move him out of the way of it.

To his governor's huge content, he found that he readily embraced the attractive project of seeing somewhat of the art of war; but now that Master Shakspare had him where he so desired, he was by no means free from disquietude; for one moment, seeing the stoutness with which the battle was

contested, he feared he might come to harm, and so cause the greatest unhappiness that could befall his noble mother; and anon, noting his wilful heedlessness of proper discipline, he despaired of his distinguishing himself as would be most to her contentation.

Weapons of numberless sorts were now glancing threateningly in all directions around him—the well-tempered Damascus blade crossing the trusty Toledo, and the bright Moorish lance ringing against the Milan breastplate. The spirited war cry of "God and St. Mark," from the stout soldiers of the republic, was replied to by deafening shouts in which "Allah" and "Mahomet" could not fail of being heard. The Turks opposed the Venetians at every inch, endeavoring with frantic fury to break their ranks, but the latter forced them back with great slaughter after a long and severe contest, and advanced to a bridge entering upon the town, which was defended by petards supported by a strong force of desperate infidels. If Master Shakespeare found enough employment in looking to the safety of his young companion in arms, awhile since, in the attack on the bridge that soon followed, the service was one that required tenfold watchfulness.

The winged Lion waved proudly above the heads of its defenders, as they came steadily on to the assault in the very face of the terrible iron engines, that vomited their deadly iron shower amongst them. Here the Venetians suffered severely, for when the Turkish engineers had fired their formidable artillery, numerous matchlock men from the neighboring houses and walls kept up a murderous fire, whilst they prepared for another discharge. Cries, mingled with groans, and defiance, were answered with insults and execrations. More than once the brave soldiers of Venice were beaten back on this point, but they eagerly responded to the voice of their commanders, and pressed forward to revenge their slaughtered comrades.

My Lord of Pembroke's heir was often in the most imminent peril—his companions kept falling fast around him, and it could scarce be expected he could long escape the same end, for he had got himself in the foremost ranks, and, to the admiration of both friends and foes, was ever with his anxious governor close at his side, the first to push forward after a repulse. The behavior of the English cavaliers so inspired their allies, that on a sudden they all rushed, in spite of the storm of missiles that saluted them, up to the very mouths of the

cannon. The engineers fled from their guns, and the bridge was in the possession of the Venetians.

It was here, during the short but slaughtered conflict that took place before the Turks finally gave way, that a gigantic infidel threw himself suddenly before young Herbert, as he impetuously pressed onward with the most daring of the assailants, after their retreating foes, and easily beating aside his slight rapier, the glittering blade he wielded with no less strength than skill was descending on the youth's head, when it fell from a nerveless grasp, as the sword of the trusty governor was buried to the hilt in his heart. Thrice had a similar service been conferred, in that perilous fight, by the same vigorous arm; then the watchful guardian, assuming a calm he felt not, had been forced to hurry on in a feverish anxiety, to avert the mischiefs that seemed to threaten him in countless numbers; but in this instance, the greatness of the escape of his charge affected him so, that he lost sight of his ordinary self-control, and with a frantic transport embraced him with all manner of joyful and endearing ejaculations. He was not long, however, before he became aware of his forgetfulness, and as suddenly left his passionate fond humor to put on the more sober fashion of the worthy governor. Fortunately, as he thought, the youth untried not the strangeness of his behavior, taking it to be excessive pleasure in having effected his rescue, in so timely a manner, and did no more than express his thankfulness for such excellent service.

Just at this time, the Captain-General of the Venetian army coming up, stopped at sight of the two English cavaliers, and, before all the captains and soldiers around him, did commend them exceedingly for their notable gallantry. Fired with this praise, both presently hastened with the main body into the town, which was stormed at all points. Numbers of the Turks were driven into the sea—many perished in the houses in which they vainly attempted to defend themselves—and the few who remained together in the streets, keeping up a desperate and hopeless resistance, disdaining quarter and shouting defiance to their enemies, were cut down to a man.

Scarcely was this glorious victory completed, when the fleet of the republic, after an equally successful conflict with the Turkish ships, returned with several prizes, the rest having been either sunk, or scattered to the winds, so that no two of them could be found together. Such an humbling of the Ottoman power the state of Venice had

not achieved for many a year, and great was the exultation among all classes, both of the land and sea forces in consequence.

My Lord of Pembroke's heir and his worthy governor were held in especial honor by their principal men of war, for the exceeding valor they had displayed when the fight was at the hottest; and, at the return of the expedition, the nobles vied with each other which should show them most favor and distinction.

Nor were the ladies in any way behind their lords in this, and showered their most bewitching smiles, as though of all things they cared for nothing so much as to have such gallant spirits for their declared servants and devoted favored lovers. As there were many amongst them of a very exquisite and ravishing beauty, Master Shakspeare did look with no slight degree of alarm on the greatness of the temptation with which his young charge was now surrounded; and he had need of all his watchfulness to take heed he thrust himself in no fatal mischiefs. The secret assignations—the nightly serenades—the stolen interviews—he knew to be full of deadly peril; and he never saw him enter his gondola but he feared the poniard of some envious rival, or the poison of some jealous mistress, would put a terrible close to the adventure, in which, he was but too well aware, he was then embarking.

It was on the very balmiest of moonlight nights, when the silver radiance of that planet, which is so well liked of lovers, was lighting up the rich architecture of one of the stateliest palaces in all Venice, that a lady of that ripe and luscious loveliness that doth, as it were, take the senses of the gazer by storm, was seen in such glorious robes and ornaments, as could the most temptingly set off her admirable form and countenance, leaning on a balcony over-against a marble terrace that led by a flight of steps into the canal that washed the base-
ment walls of the building, looking with eyes lustrious as fire, yet possessed of a tenderness withal, that did marvellously soften their flaming glances, across the water, as though for something she expected there to behold. Ever and anon a melancholy gondola would be seen gliding along, and the voices of the gondoliers might be heard answering to each other in words of liquid sweetness and tones of passionate music. Perchance the slight breeze, that so gently stirred the waters, would waft to the ear of the watcher a burst of harmony which was readily recognized as a serenade of some fond lover for the peculiar delectation

of his, perchance, equally fond mistress; but these were all afar off, and evidently were not, in any way, attending upon the pleasures of the lady of the balcony.

She seemed to span the blue waves that spread out before her glance with an increasing interest—the glowing cheek sometimes paling, and anon, flushing to a warmer hue than before, as she watched the course of the distant gondolas. Presently she noted one dexterously turned into the channel that flowed beneath her, and then her rosy mouth dimpled into an expression of such delicious sweetness, that doth defy the poet or the painter's craft to do justice to; and, after waiting awhile with an eloquent heaving breast, a softer glance, and a more crimsoned cheek, as she recognized the well-known boat being propelled towards the palace, she retired a little distance, whence she could conveniently see and yet not be seen.

The gondola was urged onward till it stopped at the foot of the stairs—thereupon a strain of soft music commenced, which presently received additional harmony, of no ordinary sort, from a rich, manly voice, whose every note was as full of passion as of music. The words, which lacked no art in the singer to make them sufficiently expressive, were to the following purpose:

SERENADE.

The day hath lost its gladness,
Bella Donna!
The night is wrapt in sadness,
Bella Donna!
The wave, the shore, the skies,
Now don their sober dyes,
Pining for thy sweet eyes,
Bella Donna!

Then bring thy fondest glanees,
Bella Donna!
To chase such solemn fanees,
Bella Donna!
And hear, till blushing morn,
All nature put to scorn,
And love's soft worship sworn,
Bella Donna!

As the song of the unseen singer came to its close, the lady, with looks that did most completely bespeak her approval of its

sentiments, came to the balcony and waved her handkerchief. A moment, and there leapt on shore a young and handsome cavalier—a moment more he had ascended the stairs, crossed the terrace, reached the balcony, and was locked in the arms of the kind Venetian. Scarce, however, had the lovers begun to give utterance to their mutual adoration, when a shadow fell upon them, and the figure of an old man, whose wrinkled visage was distorted with hatred and jealousy, was seen creeping stealthily behind them, with a long, sharp dagger clutched in his nerveless grasp.

"Fly, Signor Erberto! Maledetto! here is my husband!" screamed the terrified dame, as she glided from his embrace and disappeared. The youth was so hugely surprised that he knew not where to look for the unwelcome intruder; and the threatening weapon was already gleaming in his eyes, when a figure, closely wrapped in a black domino, and as closely masked, rushed from his place of concealment, and, in the same instant, the meditated assassin was hurled down the marble stairs, and lay stunned and motionless at the bottom.

"Well met again, Excellency," said an unknown voice, cheerfully.

"And again I thank thee, Signor," replied the giant, though with more reserve than might have been expected under the circumstances. "But methinks it seemeth marvellous strange thou shouldest ever be at hand when my life is in jeopardy. I would fain know to whom I am so hugely indebted."

"Pardon me, Signor Erberto," said the other, "my name is not of such importance to deserve the attention of a noble English cavalier, like yourself. But let me warn you, Excellency, that if you leave not this city ere another sun sets, the vengeance of offended husbands and jealous rivals, to whom you have given such potent provocation, cannot fail of overtaking you."

"A notable warning, I' faith!" cried the youth, laughingly. "But I fear me much I am in no case for profiting by it, while the dames of this beautiful city are at once so fair and so kind."

"Cospetto! they are indeed a temptation," said the stranger, but added, more gravely, "The love which is so lightly won, methinks, ought to be valued by any man, who is not a fool or madman, as of little account in comparison with his own life."

"Am I fool or madman, Signor, if I choose to risk my life in such pursuits?" angrily demanded the fiery youth.

"In honest truth, so it would seem," quietly replied the other.

"And, perchance, I may be thought something worse?" asked Master Herbert, with every symptom of a rising passion.

"I doubt not you would be open to such an opinion," gravely responded his companion.

"Nay, by this hand, this is sheer insult!" exclaimed the impetuous young Englishman. "You have put an intolerable affront on me. I will owe no obligations to one who doth good services only to hold the person on whom he conferreth them in contempt. I charge you, draw and defend yourself."

The stranger seemed unwilling at first to comply with this challenge; but soon finding he could not avoid it, he opened his domino, and drew his rapier. He had but barely time to put himself on his defence, when the rash and fiery youth came upon him so vigorously, yet so incautiously withdrawn, that, after a few rapid passes, he ran upon the point of his opponent's weapon, and it entered his side to some depth. At the sight of his blood, the stranger uttered a cry of horror and despair, impossible to be expressed; and his mask dropping off as he stooped to catch the wounded youth, who was falling in a swoon to the ground, there appeared the noble features of Master Shakespeare. He hurriedly caught his young charge in his arms, and carried him down to the gondola, where he presently bound up the wound, and soon had him safe at his own lodgings, under the care of the skilfullest chirurgeons in Venice.

Master Herbert never knew by whom he had been wounded, and believed that he had been discovered after he had received his hurt. The worthy governor now played the part of the anxious nurse, not only attending strictly to the surgeon's directions, but making the hours of the invalid—restless at all times, but now still more impatient of confinement—so pleasant with the legends and ballads he had picked up from the gondoliers and others, that he seemed to forget he was under any restraint. Foremost in these narratives in his favor was the romantic story of a Moor, who was a general of the Venetian army, and, taking to wife an exquisite Venetian lady, was driven to such a madness of jealousy by the perjuries of an artful villain, that he stifled his fair wife as she slept; and when he found how deeply he had been deceived, presently laid violent hands on himself, and died, in the old Roman fashion, with his own sword.

In this way he was healed in an incredible short time; and, leaving Venice, they travelled in the direction of Verona, visiting all the places worthy of note in their way. It is true, young Herbert seemed to listen to what came from his worthy tutor with more attentiveness than formerly; but the magic of a pair of black eyes soon deprived the forciblest lessons of wisdom of their attraction; and he was wont to neglect them altogether when he found more pleasing studies elsewhere. Master Shakspeare lived in a state of exceeding anxiousness about his young charge, who would be absent from him for two or three days together, dreading he was engaged in some questionable adventure, endangering as much his credit as his safety; but he so loved him, as much now for some nobler qualities he had seen in him, as for the noble mother he did so forcibly remind him of, that he found greater difficulties every day to put on the governor towards him, as harshly as he made it necessary.

It is essential that here the author should change the scene of the many-colored life he has essayed to draw, to one as strangely differing from what the understanding reader hath had knowledge of, as doth a phoenix from a barn-door fowl. So, with his permission, I will at once transport him to one of the wildest landscapes that ever figured in a painter's canvas or a poet's dream. It was a sort of ravine or gorge in the mountains, enclosed by huge masses of granite, covered with lichens of various colors; but rank and luxuriant vegetation of shrubs and grasses was perceptible where the soil was deeper, with here and there a tall tree, stretching its giant arms far above.

Picketed where the best folder seemed to grow were two or three young horses, which, to all appearance, were worth a fair sum, save only to such as were well experienced in the buying of horse-flesh, who would detect in them such faults, cunningly disguised though they were, that made them comparatively worthless. Further off were asses and mules grazing at full liberty, save that a half-naked urchin, who seemed to find excellent sport, as he lay at his length on the ground, by gambling with himself for a single doit, was watching that they strayed not too far. In one place tents were pitched; in another, a fire burnt, and a huge black pot was reeking over it; but, save a few boys lying about in idle, listless groups here and there, whose devil-may-care features appeared to have lost half their audacity, there was nothing of hum in life visible.

But, on getting behind the tents, this

could be no longer the case, for, lo! there was an assemblage grouped together, of man and woman, of age and youth, swarthy as Moors; all looking as wild and lawless a set as ever cheated or robbed, and not a few having just that sort of visage commonly thought to belong exclusively to such as deal in witchcraft, and have dealings with the arch enemy of mankind.

Truly this was as diabolical a set of beings as could ever have been found together in one place. They squatted on their hauns, excepting some who leaned against the rock, or lay at full length, resting on their elbows; but the faces of all had the same settled stern malignity, whether it was that of the toothless crone, or the budding girl, the decrepid grandfather, or the sportive child—all, save one, and she was as different from all around her as is a costly gem among bisest pebbles. She stood in the centre of the circle, her hands tied behind her; and, though the stream of silken hair, that hung dishevelled over her graceful shoulders, almost concealed her exquisite countenance, there was enough of her visible to show it could be no other thus strangely placed than the wondrous dancer of the Ronnaica, the seductive Bohemian, the idolized Xariqua, whom the reader last beheld winning all hearts in the streets of Rome.

But what a change was here! She then was free as a bird, and as though her heart was only lighter than her fairy feet. Now the downcast eye, the cheek of deathlike paleness, the compressed lip, and the quick heaving of her breast, betokened a state fearfully different. What meant this? In honest truth no other than this—she had sinned against the laws of her tribe, and was now on her trial. Her offence was one that, in their savage code, was visited the most heavily of all for which they sought to legislate. The very spirit of their distinct existence was an irreconcileable hatred against all who were not of their blood, and she had been detected in indulging a passion for a stranger. As her judges and accusers were influenced by one feeling, and as their law expressly stated the crime and the punishment, they were not long in coming to a verdict. In short, she had been tried and condemned. The oldest man of the tribe, a hoary patriarch, with beetling eyebrows and tanned and shrivelled skin, arose in all the dignity of rags and dirt, and, leaning heavily on a long staff, in a cold and malignant tone thus addressed the criminal.

"Woman, thou hast brought shame and dishonor on the Rommancee! thou hast bestowed thyself on one of the hated Bosnee.

Woman! it was lawful for thee to have so conducted thyself with a lover of that accursed race, that he might be deluded, cheated, and tricked for thy especial sport and satisfaction; and when thou hadst had sufficient gain of him, there was plenty of our people ready to eat his throat—too good a death for so base a hound!—hid it been thy command. Woman, thou hast not sought to show the craft of the Rommanee in thy dealings with this son of a hated race; it is known and proved that thou hast loved him—may his blood be drink for dogs!—only as thou shouldst love the man of thine own people.

"It is provided by our law that the woman who shall commit this villainy shall assuredly die; that the manner of her death shall be by the knife; that it shall be done in a convenient secret place; and that the punishment of her crime after this manner shall, under all cases and circumstances, be by the hand of her next of kin."

"Oh! no, no!" shrieked the criminal, looking wildly at her judges, "you cannot be so inhuman—an act so monstrous can never be intended. I am ready to die. I will not shrink—I will not utter a groan. But to find my executioner in mine own child—oh, it is too terrible! Spare me!—have mercy! You that are mothers, you that are fathers, you that have seen how a mother's heart clings to her own offspring—pray you change this horrible sentence, and I will willingly endure a thousand deaths of another sort, be they all the cruellest that ever were devised!"

She implored in vain. They who chose to take any heed of her appeal coldly said, "It is our law;" others answered her with curses, and the rest moved carelessly away. Then she frantically called on one, and reminded him of such a service she had done him; another she bade remember her promises of returning, on a fit occasion, some portion of the benefits she had bestowed upon her; a third she begged, in return for the securing his happiness with his mistress, he would strive for her to get so intolerable a sentence altered. They one and all muttered, "It is our law," and departed their several ways.

At this time two horses, with rude bridles were brought; and one of the savagest of the tribe leaping on one, the criminal was placed before him. The boy noticed in another chapter now made his appearance, dogged and sullen in visage, yet with a resoluteness worthy of one of the devil's imps. He leaped on the other horse, and

they both rode through the gorge, till they came to a clump of cork-trees quite out of sight of the encampment. At the foot of one a grave had been dug.

The poor dancer had not failed to use the most moving entreaties which, in her agony, she could think of; but she might have as well addressed them to a stone as to her companion. He interrupted them with the horriblest imprecations; and, alighting at the end of his journey, roughly took her off her seat, and bound her with cords to a tree. He then addressed the boy, and, putting a long, sharp knife into his hand, bade him act as became one of the true blood, and he should be their king, as his father was. Having said this, he mounted his horse, and returned to his people, without attempting to look back, or show any further concern in the matter.

The criminal had uttered never a word since she had been bound to the tree. But her eyes were fixed on her son with an intensity of horrible curioseness which language can give but an exceeding faint idea of. Her face was of a bluish paleness, and in the expression of it, at that time, was something which seemed awfully unearthly. There was no motion at her heart, there was no color in her lips; in her eyes only there looked to be life, and it was such life as the living had never before been known to have possession.

The boy remained for a few seconds gazing on the weapon given him for the atrocious act he was expected to perform. Whether his memory fell back upon the numberless proofs of the deepest and sincerest love woman ever felt for her first-born he had experienced, or whether, as was more common to the children of these singular and abominable race, he was insensible to any grateful feeling, and indifferent to the most sacred ties, cannot be ascertained; but the sounds from the hoofs of the retreating horse had died away before he ventured to look up.

At that instant he met the full force of the spectral gaze that had been fixed upon him, and it made him start as though he had felt the shock of an earthquake. He seemed to strive to avoid it, but on him it had the power of fascination. He could not glance aside; he could not turn. He felt his feet rooted to the ground, and his eyes drawn as though by cords in the direction of those whose light he was there to quench for ever. His arms fell powerless at his side; the weapon dropped from his feeble grasp. He felt sick faint, burn-

ing, scorching, suffocating; and presently, with a loud cry, fell down in a fit into the open grave before him.

This result had scarcely been effected, when a youthful cavalier, who had, for some moments prior, been engaged in making a cautious descent from a neighboring tree, flew as though on wings to the intended victim; and, rapidly cutting the cords which bound her, easily placed her, insensible as she was, on the horse quietly grazing near, which he then mounted and rode off over the broken and tortuous paths that led from this savage scene, at its fullest speed.

It was not till all chance of immediate pursuit seemed removed, that the cavalier ventured to slacken the pace for the purpose of beholding the state of his helpless burden. He unclasped his arms, and looked on her face. The current of air to which she had been exposed during her rapid journey appeared to have revived her somewhat; a more natural color had returned to her skin; she breathed gently but regularly; anon she opened her eyes; and then, with a very ecstasy of gladness, murmured "Erberto mio!" as she gave back her lover's affectionate embrace. She then fell into another swoon; but a few drops from the contents of a hunting-flask recovered her presently, and he pushed on as fast as he could to where his own horses were waiting, where he arrived just as the one on which he rode showed undeniable symptoms of being utterly exhausted of its strength.

CHAPTER XXVII.

We came to Paris on the Seine,
'Tis wondrous fair, 'tis nothing clean,
'Tis Europe's greatest town:
How strong it is I need not tell it,
For all the world may easil smell it,
That walk it up and down.

RICHARD CORBET.

In the time sought to be illustrated in this veritable story there was a worshipful city, the fame whereof was bruited far and wide as the abode and seat, as it were, of pleasure; for, from the very getting up of the sun to its lying down, nought seemed to be known or understood in that gay place, but the art of passing time—or wasting it, according to some—in the pursuit of the most agreeable pastime in which man and woman could be engaged. This pastime, be it known, which was so generally engaged in, that old and young, rich and poor,

learned and ignorant, the greatest statesmen and the most absolute blockheads, joined in it with a like eagerness, and each, after his own fashion, made it the very business of his life, was, by general consent, regarded by a name to which it had no manner of pretension. As in a great cage of monkeys you shall see every one of them filching his neighbor's apple rather than guard his own, these worthy persons took on themselves to leave their wives, or daughters, or sisters, or mistresses, as the case might be, for any man's unlawful having, while they were dishonestly intent on the wives, daughters, sisters, or mistresses of their especial friends; and this was to them a source of infinite contention, nay, the *summum bonum* of their lives—and the name they gave to this pleasure was none other than "Love."

Now it chanced that the king of this people as much exceeded any of his subjects in the energy with which he embarked in those pleasant adventures, as doth a triton exceed a minnow. It would be in vain to number the wives, daughters, sisters, and mistresses of other men who were honored as objects of his particular and right royal regard. In these pleasant affairs he was a merchant adventurer, who had taken out letters of marque against all and sundry the fairest dames and damsels that were to be met with on the high seas of gallantry; and, though he chose to appear as a holiday barge rather than as a corsair, he rifled such as fell in his way as completely as though he carried a black flag at his mast; and the citizens of his good city looked up to him with admiration, assisting him with all their powers to secure success in his several adventures, feeling most loyally indignant when he met with any obstinate, rebellious virtuousness, and triumphing in his successes over chastity, modesty, and the like sort of traitorous criminality, as though they felt a more than ordinary interest in the prosperity of his undertaking.

The consequence whereof was that the whole city was continually astir with every sort of entertainment that could so please the fair dames and damsels within its walls, as to incline their hearts to shire in that pastime which both sexes had been pleased to distinguish with the name just mentioned. Dancing, singing, feasting, drinking, gambling, and all other pleasures whatsoever, were in such constant requisition, that an indifferent person might have said, after observing this constant hum or revelry, that there could be no other business in the world. Such was the city, and such its

sovereign—such was Paris at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and such its popular monarch—the gay, the gallant, fond, and fickle Henri Quatre.

It was about a month after the circumstance related at the close of the last chapter that the gayest palace of this gay city seemed to have assumed more than its customary excess of revelry. Wherever the eye turned within this magnificent building, it fell upon evidences of luxury, profusion, and grandeur. Such carving, such gilding, such painting, such tapestry, such gold and silver plate, bright burning lights, such variety of costly raiment, such abundance of rich jewels, such dancing, such music, such a multitude of light hearts, and, to say the truth, lighter heads, could be found in no other place in the world. And, in especial, the principal state rooms seemed the very court of pleasure, where every one gave himself up to the most absolute enjoyment. Albeit, instead of the dwelling of a Christian king, it seemed the palace of a heathen Aspasia, where beauty was the passport of both sexes, and all qualities, gifts, and enjoyments made to minister to the gratification of personal vanity.

There were great lords and great ladies, great statesmen and great prelates, great soldiers and great wits, one and all intent upon considering themselves under the shafts of the rosy urchin whose arrows are of such intolerable keenness. The very atmosphere was pregnant with vows of everlasting devotedness, and praises of incomparable attractions—whereof the vows might stand firm for a week at the least, and the attractions be deemed matchless for a duration almost as long; provided always no other form and features appeared with any pretensions to rivalry.

The great lords and ladies made their language to be less of the proper court phrase than the proper courting phrase. The great statesmen pondered less on nations and their policy than on hearts and their affections. The great prelates preached but from one text, which was “Love one another;” and, to their praise be it said—after a certain fashion—they practised as they preached. The great soldiers chose one particular campaign only, wherein, in besieging hearts, taking captive such as resisted them, and in bringing their fair enemy to an engagement, they covered themselves with laurels more than sufficient to have satisfied all the Caesars; and the great wits were ever industrious in the invention of sugared poems, pretty jests, choice epigrams, quaint sonnets, and the like dainty

goods, upon one theme only, whereof the reader may presently get acquainted by the prominence with which such brave words as “love” and “dove,” “heart” and “dart,” “grace” and “face,” are thrust before him.

Filled with a throng of such worshipful good company, the palace of the King of France presented a scene alike joyous and picturesque. The bravery of dress displayed by both sexes outrivalled the peacock and the dolphin in delicate colors, and in gold and gems looked as though the jewelers of the city had scattered their whole shops upon their several persons. They were engaged in all sorts of ways. In one chamber they sat round tables gambling with cards and dice, ladies as well as lords, and, perchance, the winnings of the latter from the others were rarely paid or demanded in the current coin; in another, they danced to amorous tunes measures of a like tender character; in a third was much passionate singing, and discoursing a monstrous deal of flattery, and a prodigal allowance of scandal—the natural sauces which do most delight a courtly palate. There were groups of spectators, and groups of gossips; groups of busybodies, and groups of idlers; groups of young courtiers, discussing the perfections of the thousand-and-first last new favorite; and groups of old ones, equally fluent in their recollections of the thousand who had preceded her.

Then in one place you heard a sort of popinjay, with the earnestness of life and death, laying down the law respecting the color of the beard, the material of a doublet, and the fashion of a sleeve; while in another should be a throng of vain-glorious libertines, making free with the reputation of every lady who had the misfortune to be of their acquaintance. It is our business with none of these, but with a small party of young gallants, who stood in a recess some little way apart from the rest, and seemed exceedingly well satisfied with themselves, and inclined to hold every one else at an infinitely less valuation.

They spoke of their own little exploits, both in the duello, and in the favor of fair dames, with a self-exultation that made them appear as monstrous fine fellows as you shall see any where. There was no lack of names of great ladies, with whom they wished it to be known they had become, as it were, hand and glove, and they abounded in anecdotes sufficiently explanatory of the excellent understanding that existed between them. From this they took to scandalous gossip, and put forth insinuations respecting certain ladies of their ac-

quaintance, that were exceeding defamatory. They dilated on the orgies of the Hotel de Sens, and disputed as to the exact number within a score or two of the lovers of its voluptuous mistress, Margaret de Valois. They made comparisons between the last batch of the king's mistresses, and the most celebrated of their predecessors, in which divers delectable tales were told of the fair Gabriele, Charlotte des Essarts, la belle Corisande, the beautiful daughter of the gardener of Aret, and many others.

One thing leading to another, they at last began to discourse of the appearance in Paris of a mysterious stranger, whose arrival had for some days past caused the circulation of the most marvellous stories ever told of a pretty woman, and had set the youths of the court and city in a fever of curiosity to know who and what she was, and whence she came. All that was really known was that she entered Paris in company with a young gallant, supposed to be an English nobleman, who affected the strictest secrecy and privacy; that they lived in handsome lodgings, without friends or visitors; that she was young and of a ravishing beauty, and was supposed to be a Jewess. This was but scant materials, but it was sufficient to originate the most strange and eventful histories ever heard, even in a city so famed for the marvellous, as the capital of the King of France.

It chanced, that, as these idlers were intent upon their discourse, a party of five or six individuals in passing through the rooms took up a position close to them, for the better observation of the crowd of gay company that went from one apartment into another. Sundry of these were of the courteous reader's especial friends: to wit, the noble and gallant Sir George Carew, not as had been his wont many a festive day in the glittering chambers of this gay palace, with the fair and gentle Susanna Shakespeare on his arm, to whom, to the huge envy of all the gallants of the court, who much desired to be in the good graces of a creature so fresh and beautiful, he bore himself with the tenderness of a parent, and the gallantry of a lover, out of respect for his especial friend, her worthy father; but, in close and serious converse with that friend, whose thoughtful brow was impressed with an expression of deep sadness, as if the import of what he discoursed of was a matter of life and death.

They were a little in advance of their party, the principal persons of whom, out of all doubt, were the stately Lady Carew herself, having, on one side of

her, in all the imposing pomp and vanity of his church, a right reverend cardinal; but the bravery of his dress fell short of that of his speech, which did out-compliment the very finest words courtier ever spoke. Yet though it seemed directed to this excellent fair lady and no other, she was wise enough to know it was intended for her exquisitely fair companion, our admirable acquaintance Susanne, who, dressed in the full court tire, looked a princess at the least, as she bowed her graceful head in courteous acknowledgment of the numberless fine things said to her and of her, by a distinguished grand duke, who had the honor of walking by her side. After these came certain princes, marshals, and prelates, having the new made knight, young Sir Hugh Clopton, in the midst of them, in whose hearing they rivalled each other in the extravagant things they said of the charms of "la belle Susanne," who had caused the composition of ballads, ditties, sonnets, and madrigals, since her arrival in France, out of all number.

As Master Shakspeare and his attentive friend passed the knot of talkers in the recess, he heard part of a sentence, which caused him to interrupt some observation the other had commenced.

"A young Englishman, say you?" said one of them, in a tone of exaltation.

"Perdie, that is well! These English are always thrusting their insolent pretensions before some charming creature or other, for whom a Frenchman is her only proper lover: but we have but to show ourselves, and the intruder is content to make the best of his way to his own foggy island, leaving the prize in our possession."

"*Pardonnez moi, mon ami,*" replied the one who had spoken immediately before; "but this Englishman is not to be so easily disposed of. I am told he carried her off from an army of Turks, who were taking her to the prince, their sultan, after slaying with his own sword I know not how many of her turbaned escort."

"By this light, these English are mad!" observed another.

"They have not brains enough to be mad. They are only foolhardy," said one less charitable.

"I know not, gentlemen, whether they be one or the other," resumed the former speaker; "but of this I am sure, that Monsieur le Comte du Barre, my cousin, having contrived, by the most politic stratagem, to gain admittance by the door, to the lodging of this charming Jewess, or Moorish princess, or whatever she may be, in a few se-

conds was seen to make her exit by the window, in a fashou that must needs have been intolerably disagreeable to so fine a gentleman."

"How was that?" exclaimed half a dozen voices, in some astonishment.

"It was the pestilent Englishman!" replied the other, with a shrug of his shoulders, that said a great deal more than his speech.

"Bah!" cried the first speaker, in great contempt; "Monsieur le Comte should have chastised this rude fellow with his rapier, and then carried off his mistress."

"My cousin, Monsieur le Comte du Barre, intended so to do," answered the other; "but the Englishman, almost as soon as he drew, sent my cousin's rapier flying some twenty yards off in one direction, and then, taking him by the back part of his embroidered murray velvet trunks, and, seizing him with the other hand by the neck of his satin doublet, sent Monsieur le Comte du Barre flying through an open window, some twenty yards off, in another."

At this the party uttered various exclamations of indignation and horror, with a handsome sprinkling of the newest oaths, during which a few words passed between Master Shakspeare and Sir George Carew, which ended in the latter making his way towards the group; and, as he knew them all exceeding well, he addressed them as his familiars, begging to be made acquainted with the subject of a discourse, which could not be but of surpassing interest, as it rendered them indifferent to the attractive scene around them. Courteous pleasantries followed on both sides, after which he heard all that they had to tell concerning the Moorish princess, or Jewess, or the grand Turk's favorite Sultana—as she was described to be by his various informants—and her English lover.

"You are right, Will," exclaimed Sir George, as he returned to his friend, with his ever pleasant countenance beaming with infinite satisfaction in every feature. "These fine chattering popinjays were talking of your lost sheep, and the seductive wolf who had carried him off."

"Let us away, Sir George!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, eagerly, all trace of his late seriousness disappearing:—"He hath led me a fine dance, and hath filled me with the most absolute anxiousness poor governor ever endured, since, with my trusty squire, Simon Stockfish, I have been tracing his footsteps. I prythee let us away, and secure him at once!"

"Not so fast, friend Will!" replied Sir George. "At present he is safe enough, I warrant you; and it will be as well not to disturb his fancied security till we have the means of holding him fast for the future. I will lose no time in consulting a certain excellent powerful friend of mine, who will be here anon, and will put us in a way of securing your scapegrace, and of placing his dark dulcinea in worse than Egyptian bondage, where she must needs find other pastime than stealing young noblemen from their proper guardians and teachers. But we must hasten to pay our respects to the crowned majesty of France; for, having obtained permission to present you both to Henri and the royal Marie de Medicis, his ill-beloved consort, I should get myself into huge disgrace were I to allow you to leave the palace without the necessary presentation, so you must e'en with me, my master, as my poor jest hath it, 'Willi nilti.'"

Seeing there was no help for it, Master Shakspeare proceeded through two or three of the state apartments, and, notwithstanding his excessive eagerness once again to get his youthful charge under his governance, he could not help being famously entertained by the little histories his companion gave him of the different notables with whom he exchanged courtesies, or whom he pointed out in the crowd, as well as some account he furnished of divers intrigues in which the present favorite, the Marchioness de Verneuil, was engaged for the purpose of securing her power over the king, and bumbling and annoying the queen. Ever and anon Sir George would turn round and address some pleasantry to the daughter of his friend, who replied in a like spirit, which caused the tongues of his eminence the Cardinal and of his highness the Grand Duke to proceed with their sweet phrases with a new impulse. The graceful ease and admirable self-possession of the village-girl, amongst the most polished portion of the most polite court in Christendom, was not lost upon the delighted father. But he knew that Nature hath her nobility as well as kings and queens—and there was no finer example than he exhibited in his own person—and findeth, when it so pleaseth her, from the humblest homesteads her maids of honor, who could confer grace and dignity to a palace or to a throne.

The courtly throng increasing, the party, slowly making their way, were at last allowed to approach a group composed principally of ladies who were stationed on a *dais*, under canopy of state, in the midst of which was a throne, richly carved and gilt, whereon

sat the proud, majestic, but unhappy-looking Marie de Medicis. The display of costly silks and velvets, embroidered with gold and jewels, were here exceeding conspicuous; indeed, every thing in that grand apartment bespoke a scene of luxury and magnificence worthy the taste of a daughter of a de Medicis. The proper officers having facilitated their approach, Master Shakspeare was presented in due form by his friend; but, although the queen condescended so far as to grant the request of the English ambassador, having subsequently learned that Monsieur Shakspeare was neither a lord nor an abbé she did not at first think it necessary to notice him beyond that very slight attention the ceremony permitted; but his noble bearing and graceful courtesy of manner did impress her so favorably towards him, that she ultimately unbent herself of much of her stiffness, and even honored him so far as to mention in terms of commendation his fair daughter.

"There is a Queen of France for you, now!" said Sir George Carew to his companion, as they left the presence. "She certainly lacketh none of the external signs of a queen, but she hath no more. All the real power and consequence that should be with the king's consort rests with the king's mistress, who, besides usurping her state and inveigling her husband, puts monstrous affronts upon her, ridicules her, and seeks all she can to excite the king's mind against her. The knowledge of this maketh her to wear so grave a visage: but it is said, on pretty good authority, that she is not entirely without consolation; for that supple ecclesiastic on her right hand, the very reverend Master Richelieu, Bishop of Luçon, hath the reputation of being able to preach to her, to her heart's content, on matters of which his breviary affordeth him no text. Yet, whatever may be the state she here supports, that with which the Marchioness de Verneuil had surrounded herself in her splendid apartments in the Louvre, and in her own magnificent chateau, smacketh infinitely more of the queen."

As the two friends were pressing on with their company, a general murmur of "Le Roi! Le Roi!" whilst passing through one of the handsomest of the saloons, announced the approach of the king; and, in a minute or two, they beheld a middle-aged man, royally attired, with a peculiarly dignified bearing and pleasing aspect, though, to a close observer, it bore traces of sensuality and satiety, walking along, leaning familiarly on the arm of a man, much his senior, of a most profound gravity, to whose dis-

course he seemed to listen with very little attention, his eyes being directed to the persons within his observation, yet never resting on any for a moment, unless the individual chanced to be a woman with a new face, and a famous handsome one. But he was courteous and affable to all who recognized him, returning their courtesies in right princely fashion, and, to those who knelt, giving his hand to kiss with the air of one who strove earnestly to be considered the father of his people.

"Behold the invincible Henri Quatre, king of France and Navarre!" exclaimed Sir George Carew to his companion. "A great conqueror, truly; though his conquests have been amongst women rather than men—a great hero, according to the ideas of the former; for he hath often, to obtain an interview with one or other of them, put the fortune of a whole campaign into jeopardy, and hath purchased their smiles at little less than the cost of a kingdom. His open-handed generosity, his indulgent humor, and his graceful courtesy, seem to blind his good subjects to the extent of the evil he has created in France by the general laxity of morals throughout the country, caused by his inattention to the ordinary decencies of society. There is scarce a barber in Paris who would care to live in honorable wedlock—there is not an idler in all France who hath not as deep an interest in her destinies as his king. Fortunately for him and for France, he hath for his counsellor a man capable of managing the state for him; and equally fortunate is it, he chooses to leave it to such management."

"That must be Monsieur the Baron de Rosni, of whom I have heard so much," said Master Shakspeare.

"It is no other," answered Sir George. "And there he stands—the Grand Master of the Ordnance and Chancellor of the Kingdom—by the side of his thoughtless master; in all honesty, much too good a mentor for so indifferent a scholar. But the King's eyes are upon us, Will.—We must advance."

The two approached the King of France, who presently accosted the ambassador in a sufficiently cordial spirit; and, when the latter presented his friend, received his homage with a marvellous degree of courtesy, and, after inquiring with much apparent earnestness news of Prince Henry, he spoke to some extent of the English stage, not failing to express several well-earned compliments respecting the important share Master Shakspeare had in making it what it was. Presently he returned again to Prince

Henry, whom he mentioned in exceeding excellent terms, yet seemed to be in doubt his life would be either very happy or very long.

Master Shakspeare proved himself an admirable intelligencer, and his pertinent answers so pleased the king, he continued his questions—now asking him of his travels—now of his plays—now of the fair dames of England—now of those of Italy and France—now of his brother, the King of England—and now of him. The conference broke up at last, leaving each very favorably disposed towards the other. Whilst they were thus engaged, Sir George Carew took the opportunity of entering into conversation with the Grand Master of the Ordnance, to whom, when the king was in deep discourse with the Spanish ambassador, Master Shakspeare was presented. They conversed together for several minutes, on divers subjects, in which the great counsellor of the French king showed how well he merited the reputation he had acquired, and the friend of the English ambassador proved how worthy he was to hold discourse with him. After sundry courteous expressions on either side, Monsieur de Rosni returned to his sovereign, who had just received some news which had thrown him into an extraordinary state of disquietude. He kept exclaiming, “All is lost! All is lost!” in the most moving tones; and, in his looks and movements, showed as a man suddenly overtaken by some overwhelming calamity.

“What think you, Will, is the monstrous evil that hath so moved this magnificent king?” asked Sir George.

“Of a truth I know not!” replied the other, “but methinks it must be something very terrible.”

“Perchance you would take it to be the destruction of an army abroad, or a terrible insurrection at home, the death of a favorite child, or the discovery of a deep spread conspiracy, the intelligence of the plague breaking out in the city, or the news of its fairest quarter being burned to the ground?”

“Surely it must be one or other of these huge calamities.”

“By this hand it is nothing more or less than the knowledge that the Princess di Conti, a young beauty, recently married, hath ventured to save herself and husband from dishonor, by flying with him out of the country!”

“This is marvellous, indeed!” cried Master Shakspeare.

By this time it had become generally known how the King’s sudden disorder had been created, and universal was the sympathy for the royal sufferer, whilst the lady

and her husband, who had dared to evade the King’s august intentions, were stigmatised as traitors of the blackest die. Several of the nobles threw themselves at the feet of their unhappy monarch, and offered their services to trace the fugitives, and happy was he above all his fellows who obtained the envied commission of proceeding on their footsteps.

“We have seen enough of this,” said Sir George. “Let us away, Will, after your lost sheep. The Grand Master of the Ordnance hath promised me all necessary help, so that now it may be ‘the hunt is up,’ as soon as you please.”

On this much, Master Shakspeare was all eagerness to be going, and the party were soon afterwards seen leaving the palace, but not before his Eminence, the Cardinal, had taken advantage of a convenient opportunity to whisper to the fair object of his attentions, a communication which had all the fervor of the most devout supplication he had ever offered; and his Highness, the Grand Duke, had availed himself in a similar manner of an occasion to express his sentiments, which were uttered with no less impressiveness than he could have employed had he been addressing an assembly of notables. And the small crowd of princes, marshals, and prelates, that were in her train, either by look or speech, ventured to make known to her that in losing sight of her inestimable sweet society, they should lose everything that gave attraction to the place, or pleasure to the hour. The gentle Susanna acknowledged all these precious courtesies, with an air of graceful indifference and happy pleasantry, and left the glittering magnificoes with as much of her regard as they had on the first moment of their acquaintance; which was of that smallness all the resources of fractions could not give it quantity.

Whilst these things were proceeding, doings of equal import to this our story were in progress in a quiet but respectable lodging in a retired part of Paris. Thither had arrived, some days before, a noble cavalier, and a beautiful lady he treated with all the tenderness and consideration due to an adored wife. The young cavalier was no less handsome than liberal—qualities that served him better in this good city than if he had brought with him the recommendations of the greatest princes in the world.

It is true the lady was of a dark complexion, and there seemed no small amount of mystery in her behavior; but the people of the house, like good Parisians of that time, finding there was a sufficiency of mo-

ney, did not think it necessary to trouble themselves about what seemed inexplicable ; in which they were confirmed by their lodgers conversing in a language of which, with all their powers of listening, they found they could not make out a word.

The understanding reader will find no difficulty in discovering that the strangers were the seductive Bohemian and my lord of Pembroke's heir. This thoughtless pair had sought such concealment the more effectively to enjoy the happiness they, in their short-sightedness, fancied was in store for them. For anything in the shape of real happiness, neither their dispositions nor their circumstances allowed ; and, in a few days after their mutual flight, they awoke from a feverish dream, with anything save the entire concentration of feeling for each other, writers have been pleased to distinguish with the name of love. Nevertheless, they would have been exceeding loath to admit there was the very slightest diminution of their mutual devotion.

If the truth must be stated, they were both of much too restless a spirit to be content with each other's society for any length of time ; and a short period after their entrance into Paris, the retirement in which they lived throwing them entirely upon their own resources, they found themselves living after a monstrous dull fashion.

La Xarqua yearned for the exulting freedom of the green woods—the guiltless intercourse of the wild family of which she was an honored member : and the young noble began to regret the seclusion that kept him from sharing in the festivities and revelries that were going on in every quarter of the gay city in which he had taken up his residence. He had been both annoyed and enraged by the impertinent curiosity of some hair-brained Frenchmen, whom the extraordinary charms of the Bohemian had influenced to an extent that made them desperately eager for any adventure that promised her notice and favor : but latterly he had taken less notice of this curiosity.

He also had been the object of similar notice, as he had received several tender communications, one of which, signed "La Dame des Roses," had not failed to create a slight impression in favor of the writer.

He had all along behaved to the companion of his flight with the very utmost devotedness ; but, to one so ignorant of anything in the shape of restraint, the comforts and luxuries with which he had surrounded her seemed a poor recompence for the inspiring dance in the free air, and the tumultuous

plaudits of crowds of spectators. He began to imagine that the care with which he had kept her concealed was unworthy of him and her. He had heard much of the attractions of the gardens of the Hôtel de Sens, wherein the gayest company in Paris were wont, not always creditably, to amuse themselves, and proposed to her, by way of a frolic, to go there disguised, and be entertained with whatever was worth seeing. A joyful assent was readily given ; and as there was no difficulty in the way of admission, he having a few days since received an invitation, the pair were soon promenading the pleasant walks and unbraegeous groves, masked and disguised so completely that they scarcely knew each other.

They mingled with the crowd of idlers that had there assembled to kill time as agreeably as possible, listening to concealed music of the most ravishing description and admiring the dancers, the jugglers, the singers, the fountains, the flowers, and the trees, that gave a fairy-like beauty to the scene. They at last found themselves in a path into which all the company seemed to be crowding, as if it led to some peculiar place of attraction. By imperceptible degrees it narrowed till it was impossible for two to walk abreast ; and on each side there rose a wall, as it were, of holly, that seemed about to contract, till further progress, even for one person, looked to be impossible.

The cavalier allowed his fair companion to precede him. The path ended in a sort of fairy temple divided into several compartments. He saw her enter one, when the whole structure turned on a pivot, and placed her out of sight. He followed into the building, and found as soon as he entered it, that it revolved with him. On its stopping, he beheld a flight of very narrow stone steps, down which he perceived his companion proceeding with considerable speed. He followed very quickly, and saw her disappear under an archway, where an ascent of steps brought him again into the open air, but in a grove thickly planted with trees.

Observing female drapery fluttering in the distance, he was quickly in pursuit, almost inclined to marvel at the sportiveness which made his mistress so nimble of motion, now she was once more under the friendly covert of such old familiar friends as the tall trees of the forest. He mended his pace, but so quick of foot was she, that only with much ado could he keep her in sight. At last he saw her enter a building by a postern door. He followed as quick

as he might, and found himself entering upon a long dark passage. Thinking he might lose her in so strange a place, he called to her to stop, but to his huge astonishment received no answer. He repeated his call with a like success. He then hurried on, not knowing what to think.

The banging of the door led him towards it. He passed through as he beheld another at some distance thrown back. In this way he went on, meeting no one, the chambers increasing in the richness of their furniture, in as great astonishment at the whole adventure, as a youth of his spirit could well be. He began to doubt that it could be his enamored mistress running from him in this strange fashion. Alas, poor youth! She to whom you direct your thoughts is far enough away in a different direction, well cared for, by one who has both the will and means ample enough to secure her from all others wh it-ever.

He at last entered a magnificent saloon, with hangings of the very richest looms of arras, delicately painted with the stories from Ovid his Metamorphoses. He made for a door he saw before him, and nothing could equal his surprise, when, on pushing it open, he found himself in a place fashioned like a bower of roses, and giving out the most ravishing perfume of that daintiest of flowers. On what seemed to be literally a bed of their odorous leaves, reposed a female figure in a garb no less classic than seductive.

He gazed as it were spell-bound—scarcely willing to believe his eyes. The lady rose gracefully from her position, and bade him welcome to her palace, where she added his presence had been long hoped for. Then, clapping her jewelled hands thrice, there entered several nymphs of ravishing loveliness, also in the ancient classic garb, bearing refreshments of the most tempting sorts, which they set before him. Half inclined to believe the whole a delusion, he tasted of the cates and the wine so temptingly brought for his delectation, and any thing for the palate so truly delicious he had never known before. He soon ascertained that he beheld his fair correspondent; and, recovering from the bewilderment into which he had at first been thrown, he presently poured out a bumper of wine, and with a gallant air drank to the health of "La Dame des Roses."

As the attendant nymphs disappeared, he could almost fancy himself that he had gone a vast way back in the history of the world, and was at the moment in classic Athens,

in the luxurious villa of the voluptuous Aspasia. Although this was not the case, he could not be considered in better bands; for, as he soon discovered, he was in the presence of Margaret de Valois, the divorced Queen of France.

The ladies of Paris were not more active in seeking new objects of attachment than the cavaliers, and the arrival of a young and handsome Englishman created as great a sensation amongst them, as his companion had done amongst the other sex. Margaret de Valois had early intelligence of the stranger's appearance, and determined to captivate him, if possible. She took her measures without delay, and the reader has seen how far they succeeded. The Lord of Pembroke's heir had heard too many stories of Margaret de Valois, not to be well satisfied as to who was his entertainer; and neither his taste nor his principles were sufficiently vitiated to make him see any gratification in an intimacy with such a personage. Nevertheless, he thought it necessary not only to conceal his sentiments, but to behave with a certain degree of gallantry.

This had its due effect. After a sufficient commodity of impassioned looks, tender speeches, amorous ditties, and the like artillery, the regal beauty fancying she had made a sufficient impression for one interview, gave another summons, which was answered on the instant by a black slave dressed in the Indian fashion, who was directed to lead her honored guest to his chamber. The Lady of the Roses accepted his murmured adieu with a glance sufficiently encouraging, and he left her bower to all appearance her vowed servant.

With the assistance of his sable conductor, he very shortly made his way to a chamber furnished in the most magnificent manner. Vessels of gold and silver, costly hangings, richly carved furniture were presented to his observation in every direction, and an almost overpowering air of luxury seemed to pervade the chamber. Our young adventurer, in a cursory glance he gave to its ornaments, saw that if the senses could be operated upon by external objects, nothing had been left undone in the furnishing of this chamber to make the influence as perfect as possible. He found a suit of the most splendid description ready for him, and every arrangement for a change of apparel worthy of a crowned head. A silver bell lay on a table of porphyry for his use, when he required an attendant. He was, however in no mood for availing himself of such munificence. There were some un-

pleasant stories afloat respecting the fate of certain gentlemen and lords, who were known to have been the lovers of Margaret de Valois, and, with every disposition to play the gallant, he had no ambition of following them too closely. Besides which he was anxious to learn something concerning his so suddenly lost mistress, who had disappeared after so very marvellous a fashion in the gardens of the Hotel de Sens ; but this he knew full well he was not likely to do as long as he remained in his present sumptuous quarters.

By drawing aside the arras, he discovered a window, and, although the day had closed, he could easily see that the chamber was elevated not more than ten or twelve feet from the ground. His resolution was soon taken. Opening the easement, he cautiously glanced at the ground beneath, and finding there nothing likely to impede his descent, he carefully let himself out feet foremost, with his face to the window, till he was supported only by his hands clinging to the sill—he then let go his hold and dropped. The shock was considerable, but in divers of his adventures he had had worse.

He now found himself in a deepening twilight, standing in the shadow of a spacious mansion, in an enclosed space that seemed to be a courtyard. If this were the case, he knew that high walls and impassable gates still stood between him and his liberty. He had not yet concluded what he should next attempt, when he heard the hum of voices approaching, and presently discerned several figures by the light of flambeaux crossing the courtyard. He kept in the shadow as close as possible.

As the party approached nearer, he fancied he recognised a voice. He redoubled his attention. He could discern a figure and countenance in which it was impossible for him to be mistaken. It was that of an English gentleman to whom he was well known, and whose powerful protection he might rely upon. With him were several persons ; but the majority, from being in the livery of Margaret de Valois, it was evident were attending his departure as an honored guest of their mistress. As they passed, he heard his friend say, “ ‘Tis marvellous strange. I can prove he entered the gardens at three of the clock, and hath not been heard of since. O my life, ‘tis exceeding strange !” What reply was made he could not distinguish, but what he had already heard was quite sufficient to cause him to decide what he should do. Stealthily creeping from his hiding, he made for the great

gates, which a gigantic porter was unfastening for the Englishman’s exit ; when one gate opened, he watched his time, and, as the man was pulling back, the other, he quickly glided out.

He waited close by. In a few minutes, to his great relief, he heard the sound of the horses’ hoofs. His friend and his retinue of grooms and running footmen were sweeping by ; when he called out his name, the latter pulled up instantly, and the whole party stopped. It was the English Ambassador, who, not finding his friend’s scholar, had traced him to the gardens, and, as he had never returned, had been to make inquiries at the palace, where he was assured by the chamberlain, the groom of the chambers, and other domestic officers, that such a cavalier as he described had not been seen there. As their mistress was not visible, he was returning to seek the assistance of the Grand Master of the Ordnance, when the object of his disquietude, to his great relief and astonishment, unexpectedly presented himself before him.

Sir George Carew had been a frequent visitor at the mansion of the Earl and Countess of Pembroke, and was on such intimate terms with the family, as to allow of his taking upon himself to play the counsellor to the son ; and this he did so earnestly and pleasantly withal, that the thoughtless youth promised to be guided by him, and told him all his story from his flight with the Bohemian. Sir George knew too well the character of the divorced Queen, not to be fully aware of the hazard his young friend would run by remaining in Paris. He found him well enough inclined to take his departure, but felt bound to remain for the purpose of finding out where his mistress had been kidnapped. This duty Sir George promised he would himself perform, assuring his young friend, from his knowledge and influence, he was far more likely of the two to succeed.

The joy of his worthy governor at seeing him again was of the deepest sort the heart could have experienced. Master Shakespeare had ever since the discovery of his flight endured the most painful anxiety. His love for the youth, notwithstanding his wilful unsteadiness, was, as it were, twined with his life ; and his anxiousness became the more painful, as he saw how impossible it was for him to present himself before the youth’s noble mother, to inform her what little heed he had paid to the trust she had reposed in him, as to allow of his giving him the slip with so ill-chosen a companion.

Having experienced such deep distress, there is the less cause for marvelling that, on the youth's making his appearance, instead of being severely lectured for his monstrous ill conduct, he found himself clasped in the arms of his faithful fond governor, as though he were a prodigal son returned to a doting father. Nevertheless, having learned all Sir George Carew could inform him of, he was in such a fever to be gone, that he would give no one any peace till he had left Paris far behind.

He now came to the determination that these travels should end, and in a few days he was on the sea, shouting "Ho, for England!" with a more cheerful heart than he had known since his undertaking so great a charge.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ay, but the milder passions show the man;
For as the leaf doth beautify the tree,
The pleasant flowers bedeck the painted spring,
Even so in men of greatest reach and power,
A mild and pteous thought augments renown.

LODGE.

OUR young physician had now so long sojourned amongst the scenes he so well loved, as to have recovered, in a great measure, from the violent shock, both his moral and physical nature had sustained, through the abominable villainy of the infamous Millicent. His very excellent fond parent had tended him with all a mother's affection, and all a woman's delicacy. She asked no questions, and made no comments likely to give her son pain; but she had contrived to obtain a tolerable correct knowledge of his trials and sufferings, and took heed to minister to the diseased mind with that marvellous gentle hand for which her exquisite sweet sex are famous. She talked indifferently as it were, yet was there in every thing she said a healing balm, that soon began to show its wholesome effect.

With such soothing converse, joined to the healthy inspirations which nature ever giveth to such as seek her medicinal aid John Hall began once more to take a proper interest in the small concerns of daily life. He again had recourse to his books, and, in studying the art of healing others, rapidly obtained a cure for himself; albeit, though the wound was in time healed, it left a painful cicatrice. He could not think of the peril he had passed without a shudder—as one who, by wonderful good fortune, is saved from the jaws of a venomous serpent,

long after remembers with fear and trembling the vehemency of his danger.

It so chanced, that an incident occurred about this time, which, though it was fruitful of misfortune to him beyond any thing that could have happened, by engrossing his attention, perfected his cure more readily than other things could. This was the death of his admirable mother. Her only son had been to her the very well-spring of her pure life. Her late anxiety had been infinitely greater than it seemed, but it did not show itself upon her delicate system, till it appeared no longer to be excited by the subject. Then she fell ill, and though she was cared for by the most skilful and tender of nurses, she daily grew worse. The fiat had gone forth, and it found her well prepared, though it was a sore struggle to part from all she so dearly loved and prized. Her beloved son had her last wishes, her last blessings, and her last prayers; and then the fragile form that rested in his arms became but as a clod of the earth, oblivious of the active world of fine perceptions and excellent influences that had so long and well supported the claim of its spirit to immortality.

John Hall buried her in the well remembered nook in the green churchyard, where his other parent had found his last resting-place, and he went forth from its melancholy memorials with a saddened heart, it is true, but with a vigorous desire, that became a joy to him in after-life, to prove himself worthy of that immeasurable love he had just seen shut out from communion with mortality, by the only gates that never re-open for those they enclose.

On proceeding to examine the papers the fond mother had with a careful foresight prepared in case of her decease, our young physician found fresh evidence of her rare affection. By the most rigid economy and comprehensive self-denial, she had contrived to save what he saw at once was a sufficient sum, not only to finish his education, but to give him a good start in his profession, and in the directions with which this sum was made over to him, he read what was henceforth to become the twelve tables of his law.

As soon as possible, he prepared to follow the first and most important of her wishes, and entered himself a student in one of the most esteemed colleges at Oxford. Here he remained, steadily pursuing his studies, and winning the esteem of the learned in that famous school, till he obtained his degree. It was about this time, that he was found by his father's faithful

serving-man, Simon Stockfish, when at Oxford on business of Master Shakspere. The result was their travelling to London together, which journey, thanks to omission of all attempts at policy from the over-politic serving-man, partly perchance from his conviction that his old master's son was of an age to take care of himself, was attended with no accident.

On his arrival at the lodging of Master Shakspere, he was enforced to make his home under his roof, for no denial was allowed, and Master Doctor Hall, as he must now be styled, found himself in greater contentation of mind than a few months since he could have hoped for, which he owed to the pleasant intercourse of his excellent friend, and of his excellent friend's very excellent fair daughter.

This careful friend provided against any further designs from his vindictive enemy, the false Millicent, by getting him appointed physician to the embassy in Paris, where he shortly afterwards proceeded to fulfil the duties of his office.

In the meantime, there had been other doings connected with the principal personage in this my story that deserveth not to be lost for lack of a chronicler, for as soon as his return was known, so well was he loved of all who had any acquaintance with him, he was, as it were, besieged with visitors. Among the first comers were that truly honest heart, Master Edward Allen and his buxom honest partner; and whilst the latter closeted herself with Susanna, to hear the marvels she had seen in foreign countries, the other two friends gossiped about their own matters with as ready an eloquence. The master of the Fortune spoke of the various admirable new players and matchless fresh bears he had got, so confusedly withal, that many times was his friend led into asking questions concerning the famous brute he spoke of, when the other had all the while been praising a man; and when he desired to know what place had the honor of giving birth to the estimable famous gentleman he mentioned in such high terms, learned, in some astonishment, that he believed it must have been a den in some of the trackless forests of Muscovy.

One interview he had long looked forward to with the most excited feelings. Perchance, the courteous reader hath not forgotten the memorable secret visit of a noble lady to Master Shakspere's lodgings, in the Clink Liberty. The hour had arrived when he should present himself before her, and declare how he had fulfil'd the honorable office she had induced him to take,

Many a time and oft, when in far off lands, he thought of the time when he should again stand before her, and hear what estimate she made of his services; but, with the anticipation of the happiness of again beholding her, there mingled no small share of disquietude, when he called to mind how little benefit he had been able to effect in the exercise of his office, where benefit was so greatly needed.

He had now little cause of congratulation on that score, and he could not but take a heavy share of blame to himself for not having been more strict in the execution of his duty; but, circumstanced as he was, how was he to put on the pedagogue? He had made many resolutions to use a proper severity; but when he beheld the face of the offender, all thoughts of harshness disappeared from his mind, as the dews of the morning before the flashing sun. And now he was to render an account of his stewardship! He had neglected his trust. The want of discipline that had previously been so marked had blazed forth in ungovernable wantonness, and what excuse could he have for having caused so discreditable a blot to be produced so close to her unsullied nature?

He had but one consolation. This wildness arose in a great measure from the excess of animal spirits. These must exhaust themselves before long, and then there was every hope that the many noble qualities he inherited from his noble mother would have fair play, when he must needs become an honor instead of a reproach; a source of unbounded content, instead of one of monstrous disquietude.

The worthy governor had, as carefully as he could, concealed his feelings towards his young charge from him; and though his affection would often burst through the restraints he put upon it, the other saw only in these displays a more than ordinary attachment to him, which it was impossible to resent. Had he not found vent for the powerful emotions that often so moved him, by writing down his thoughts from day to day, in many a powerful sonnet and lofty rhyme, he could not have worn the mask so well. It was now more than ever imperative on him to keep his nature under the strictest subjection. The old Earl had been called to his ancestors, and the youth, clothed with the proud distinctions of nobility, was in a situation where an evil surmise might work incalculable mischiefs.

After many delays, the interview took place. There was now no longer a necessity for its being clandestine; and, instead of creeping in disguise to obtain the conversa-

tion she wanted, the noble lady gave him audience in her own mansion. As Master Shakspeare was ushered into the lofty chamber, surrounded on all sides with the imposing evidences of rank and fortune, and beheld the stately form of that most queen-like woman, in her mourning habit, he felt much inclined to doubt her identity with the self-denying, heart-devoted being who had so long carried on an untiring war with her own feelings. But it needed not this change to induce him to treat her with the most profound respect. He bowed his head as to a shrine of unsurpassable holiness, and his heart partook of the same reverence. A deep and eloquent silence was maintained for a few minutes. The lady had schooled herself with the severe discipline of pride and self-respect to pass through this ordeal with a spirit worthy of her race. But blood respecteth no discipline—it taketh marvelous little heed of any lessons of inward or outward application.

Finally, as though determined to express one of the many sentences that presented itself to her, to break the embarrassing silence, she said in a low tone:—"My son Herbert hath borne testimony, Master Shakspeare, of your great zeal and affectionateness for his interests, whilst he had the benefit of your trusty guardianship."

"Truly, it glads my heart, my lady, to hear he hath been so good to me."

"In truth, he is ever sounding your praises. He loveth you well indeed. Methinks he hath profited much of your proper teaching."

Her companion could not in conscience affirm this.

"He seemeth to be well disposed; which is a huge comfort to me. I am wondrously anxious he should prove himself deserving of your attentions, and worthy of his family."

Master Shakspeare was anxious also, but had had reason to doubt the youth was in the right way to worthiness. As it was utterly impossible he could breathe a word of such doubt to the devoted mother, he felt forced, somewhat against his conviction, to affirm that my lord would prove himself every thing that was desired of him.

The lady had got so far with some effort; but here she came to a stop. This lasted not long, however; for, as though she thought silence more dangerous than speech, anon she strove to enter into conversation with her companion on indifferent matters, the which he encouraged by many pertinent remarks and just conclusions. But an uninterested spectator might easily have perceived that she was talking at random,

and, though she strove most earnestly to conceal her real sentiments, her emotion was getting so evident, it was impossible it could escape observation. At last she seemed to have come to a sudden resolution, for, leaving all her idle questions and unmeaning remarks, she, though evidently hugely excited, addressed him in a hurried and somewhat wild manner:—

"I sent for you, Master Shakspeare," said she, "to make one request of you." Seeing he was about to speak, she added:—"I know what you would say. Your assent is already on your tongue. Your willingness to give me further assurance of the noble spirit I have so long admired in you, I see and know how to appreciate. I am now about making a great demand upon it. It is a sacrifice which very few of your sex would make, and it is to be hoped, still fewer of mine require."

"Be assured," answered her companion, emphatically, "you cannot ask anything I should find any difficulty in granting."

A pause of a few seconds succeeded, which seemed employed by the lady in arranging her thoughts for expressing the request of which she had given notice. Presently she added, in a low voice, evidently laboring under increased excitement, and with downcast look, which seemed not able to raise itself from its enforced humbleness, "It is proper and necessary that this should be our last meeting."

Master Shakspeare seemed to hear this in some surprise, and with more regret. Without noticing him, the lady continued:—"There seemeth to me to be but one way in which our coming together, either by accident or design, can be prevented. Whilst you are in London, I can scarce help myself from meeting you at some time or another, and hearing of you at all times. I pray you, sir, of your infinite goodness, of which I have had ample evidence, this long time passed, to satisfy me in this. I must not see you again. I am asking a great matter, I am exacting a serious condition; but, sir, if you could only know how vital a thing it is to me, so noble a gentleman as I have found you, would not deny me. I pray thee leave this place, and avoid where I am with all possible care; and deem me not moved to this on light grounds. Avoid me, sir, avoid me. It is necessary for my peace of mind. As God is my help, it is a thing so absolute, it cannot, must not, be avoided!"

"Your wishes shall have a speedy accomplishment," replied he, striving to conceal his great emotion. "But this much let me say before I depart. If blessings and

prayers, good wishes and honorable thoughts can minister to your contentation, be sure, my lady, that there never can exist a more earnest laboree in your happiness."

At this her heart seemed too full for speech. After a while she held out her hand, which he advanced to take. As he knelt with more of the spirit of a devotee than of a lover to raise it to his lips, she pressed his hand eagerly in her own, and, snatching it towards her, covered it with caresses; then, muttering a fervent blessing as she rose, she rushed wildly out of the room.

A few days after this, Master Shakspeare surprised all his good friends and gossips, by announcing his intention of leaving London entirely, and retiring to live in his native town. By his fellows at the Globe such intelligence seemed most unwelcome. Since his return to England he had taken his place amongst them as of old, occasionally enrapturing the town by some new production from his golden pen, the sterlengness whereof all readily acknowledged. But it was not alone as the most successful writer of the day that his character was admirable. He was the friend of all writers, no matter how obscure, who possessed talent of any sort. He gave them honest counsel; he improved their ideas by contact with his own; he increased their knowledge out of his own boundless stores; and, after each several play had been by him and by his well advised hints improved into an effective drama, he took care to have it played in such a manner as to secure it a fair chance of success.

With the players, not only of his own company, but of all others, he was looked up to as their head and chief, and all Master Shakspeare did in the bringing out of a play was accounted as a law, which was well worthy their observance. If the tiring-room of the players was resorted to by the gallants in Queen Elizabeth's days, it became quite a fashion in those of her successor. All the gayest courtiers, the bravest gallants, and many even of the graver sort of our nobles, were wont to be found thronging round Shakspeare, either at the theatre in the Blaekfriars, the one at Southwark, or at the Mermaid Tavern; and his lively wit and his general handsomeness of behavior did so recommend him, that to several of the noblest and best amongst them, he was on such near terms of intimacy, no brother could be more kindly and honorably treated.

His circumstances had so continued to thrive, that he had become quite a man of worship as to property, having been able to

make sundry purchases of houses, both in London and in Stratford. He had also become possessed of a principal share in the property of the company to which he belonged. Though his purse was ever open to a distressed brother, and he did not fail to send ample remembrances to Stratford, he might be called a rich man. His affairs were in an excellent flourishing state, out of all doubt, but he was far from being happy. The continued wildness of the young Lord Pembroke often caused him much uneasiness; and in his own domestic state, saving only the treasury of love with which the gentle Susanna had enriched him, there was but little room for congratulation. Nevertheless, save only a few admirable rare verses, wherein he expressed his feelings towards his late pupil, and took his leave-taking of the idolized object of his Secret Passion, he never gave any evidence of complaint. In society he was ever the courteous, gracious, witty gentleman, that made his company so sought after, and his discourse so listened to. It was only in the retirement of his study, when left to the expression of his own thoughts, that they took a melancholy and unsatisfactory tone.

Among those of his old acquaintances most surprised by his determination to quit the field of his triumphs, and the scenes where his greatness had been realized and acknowledged, was honest Ned Allen. He would not at first believe he could have entertained any such serious intention, and in the feelings with which he regarded the matter, he forgot every thing relating to the two different objects of his regard, that played such fantastic tricks with his memory. But much against his will, he was convinced that he was going to lose his good gossip and fast friend. He, however, proved a friend to the last, by purchasing whatever property Master Shakspeare had in London, he could not or cared not to take with him.

There were friends of a higher though not, perchance, of a warmer sort, who as little approved this retirement of their favorite. His intention became talked of by the nobles and courtiers; and, among others, it came to the ears of that gracious young prince, now so completely the idol of the whole nation for his great virtues and gallant spirit. Prince Henry had oftentimes sought his pleasant society, and at each grew more and more to like it. Since Master Shakspeare's return, they had had much discourse together, the prince asking numberless questions concerning of what remarkable things fell under his observation

during his travels, and at every interview the other coming away more deeply impressed with the excellences of his heart and mind. A mutual liking of these noble spirits had sprung up betwixt them ; and now the prince was threatened with the loss of his pleasant associate, he had resolved not to let him go till he had been able to express his high estimate of his character.

Master Shakspeare had fixed that the last day of his stay in London should be the last day of his appearance as a writer of plays. But he wished to close his London career with some crowning work, that should excel all previous efforts. With this object in view, he had selected a subject that he had studied during his travels ; and he bestowed upon it more than ordinary pains. Of a surety, the result was of the most sterling sort—one on which the world hath stamped its hall mark of immortality. What he was intent on was well known to the young prince, who had had, at his desire, many passages read to him ; and he took counsel with certain of his friends that the representation should be as great a triumph to its author as it deserved to be.

On the morning of the day fixed for the first performance of the new play, the door of the Globe was besieged, as it were, with a crowd impatient to get admittance. Almost as soon as it was opened, the interior was as full as it could run, the best places being filled with the prince and his friends, and even among the understanding gentlemen of the pit were divers persons of worship, who were fain to be content with what accommodation they could there find. There was no room on the stage now for any fine gallant to set up his stool, and enjoy his pipe of tobacco, as he criticised the play. He was forced to be well content to take up with standing room where it could be had.

The play commenced with an audience exceedingly content to be well pleased ; but, as the exquisite poetry of this new creation fell upon their minds, their satisfaction grew upon them until it burst forth in loud and frequently-repeated plaudits. When the object of their esteem first appeared, as the magician Prospero, it seemed as though he really had the gifts he assumed, for he raised a famous storm throughout the whole house ; and as the delighted spectators learned all the excellence of the work his genius had set before them, had sufficiently admired the tender Miranda, had marvelled at the monster Caliban, and had begun to love the graceful Ariel, the enthusiasm that then manifested itself in all quarters was of the most extravagant character. At the

closing of the play, there was such a scene before the curtain as that curtain had never fallen upon. Every one seemed under the same influence. Acclamations, praises, and good wishes, burst from all the throats within the walls ; and a sea of handkerchiefs, and a forest of hats and caps, were waved to and fro, as though their owners were complimenting a hero who had gained a province, or saved a kingdom.

A few hours after he had broken away, with monstrous difficulty, from the hearty congratulatory and dolorous farewells of his fellow players and play-writers, he might have been seen seated at the festive board, whence the remains of a sumptuous banquet were being removed, and surrounded by some of the noblest of his friends, making the enjoyment of his society more prized than the precious wine and sweet cakes that were placed upon the table. The chamber was one worthy of a palace, and this most assuredly it ought to have been, for to a palace it belonged. The furniture was of the richest, the attendants numerous, and of the royal livery, and every object within sight bespoke an enlightened mind, and ample means for affording it every desirable enjoyment. Pictures, bronzes, carvings, armor, books, and musical instruments, met the eye in every direction, intermingled with a profusion of gold and silver plate, costly hangings and rich drapery.

At the head of the table was a noble youth, in a suit of embroidered velvet, in whose pleasing features and thoughtful brow the observant reader cannot fail to recognise that darling of the nation, and delight of all who had the honor of being of his acquaintance, his highness Henry Prince of Wales. On his right, sat Master Shakspeare, whose right witty speech had evidently done its office, for the prince was attending to him with such a face of enjoyment as bespoke his full appreciation of some inimitable jest. On his left was the prince's governor and chamberlain, Sir Thomas Newton, his grave aspect relaxing into pleasantry under the influence of the mirthful spirit then ruling the hour.

At the bottom of the table sat the most courteous of old courtiers, Sir George Carew, but lately returned from France ; he appeared to be bantering the young Lord Pembroke, who was seated near him, which the latter took in a humor as if he was far from being displeased. Of him it is necessary to add that he was as bravely apparelled as the last new tire, and no lack of means for paying the mercer and tailor could make him. He was known as a very

model of a gallant; a reputation he took what measures he could to increase. His handsome person and gay appearance caused him to be no less a favorite with the fair dames and gentle damsels of his acquaintance, than he was the dread of their husbands and fathers. If the truth must be told, in the respect of his wildness, little improvement was to be seen in him; and though his mind had profited much from the admirable lessons he had had during his travels, and, in some respects, he had been awakened to a clearer sense of what was due from himself to his own honorable station, it still, much too frequently happened, that in the gratification of his passions he was equally wilful and wanton.

Near him was the young Sir Hugh Clopton, in appearance as fine a gallant as my Lord of Pembroke; my Lord Southampton, returned from his exile, and much honored at court; Sir Charles Cornwallis, the prince's treasurer, and one or two more of the highest officers of the prince's household. The discourse was full and exceeding animated, the prince eagerly putting questions to Master Shakspeare of his travels, and also of books that had been sent him from other countries, and mentioning what intelligence he had had from divers noblemen and gentlemen his correspondents; thereupon Master Shakspeare would reply in speech full of pleasant recollections, not only of books and men, but of all the countries he had visited. His descriptions of scenes were very pictures; and, when he spoke of ancient Rome, or classic Naples, he so filled his hearers with remembrances of their wisdom and glory, that his words seemed to bring back—with the memories of the Cæsars and of the more powerful Cæsars, the great poets and historians whose monuments survive in all their freshness and beauty, whilst those of emperors, conquerors, and gods are crumbling into dast—the classic days of the world's youth, when the song of the mellifluous Ovid was not less honored than the law of the imperial Augustus. The discourse was greatly enriched by the appeals of the prince to Southampton, Carew, and Cornwallis, who had recently been travellers, and could furnish excellent garnish to the sumptuous feast their friend and favorite was setting before them.

Their prince did not fail to fulfil the duties of a host in other matters besides finding sufficient subjects for the conversation of his guests, and the wine having done its genial office, a little less ceremoniousness might have been perceived in the younger

portion of them. The Prince of Wales himself set the example in a pause which ensued, whilst the principal speaker was doing due respect to the rare Malmsey that had been placed before him, by calling for a song from my Lord Pembroke, who was diligently carving an orange, with his thoughts where he had last seen such choice fruit growing.

Now, of all the accomplishments of this young lord, none stood him in such good stead, amongst his numerous fair mistresses—whose sworn servant he would sometimes be, for a matter of four and twenty hours—as his very exquisite sweet voice. Whether he chose to handle the lute or not—which, by the way, had many a time and oft been a famous letter of introduction to him to the tempting dames of Italy—his song was sure to be infinitely relished. The knowledge of his musical qualities, to the which that choice musician, Dr. Bull, had given its best graces, made him ever amongst the first to procure the freshest ballads and love ditties, and nothing of the choicer sort ever came from Lawes or Wilbye but he was ready to pour out its sweetness in a moment of gentle dalliance or of social festivity.

The Prince's desire excited loud applause; and without any delayings or excusings he commenced.

THE GALLANT'S SONG.

I lead the gallant's pleasant life, who liveth at
 his ease,
Having no aim, but buxom dame and dainty
 ma d to please;
My doublet is of velvet piled, my trunks are
 gay and new,
But if my purse be all the worse, "Why
 what is that to you?"

To see me as I walk along, it is a goodly
 sight—
No maid or wife ean, for her life, but gaze
 with all her might;
The jewel glitters in my hat, the feather's cock
 is true,
But if she caries for other wares, "Why—what
 is that to you?"

Or seated at the social board, where good
 wine doth abound,
Now this I try, now that put by, until the
 room goes round.
A catch I'll roar with any man, and have my
 jest heard too,
And if my gains be loss of brains, "Why—
 what is that to you?"

Perchance, I meet some brawling knave, who
 giveth me the lie,

Then at a word I draw my sword, and at him
I let fly;
I all my skill of fence employ and make a
great to do,
If then give in, to save my skin, "Why—
what is that to you?"

But see me when "A holl! a holl! my mas-
ters!" hath been cried,
Forth I advance, to lead the damee, the host-
ess at my side—
We foot it well, the damee is pleased, and pass-
ing fair to view,
And if I find I'm to her mind, "Why—*what
is that to you?*"

Should I away from town delights, to rustic
folk resort
From blushing maid (but half afraid), to learn
her country sport;
To couch am d the golden sheaves, and hear
the ringdove coo,
But if you spy her coif awry, "Why—*what
is that to you?*"

Thus do we glide from youth to age, like
water through a trench,
A game of bowls to glad our souls, and now,
a preny wench:
New braveries, new toys, new jests—and thus
our course pursue;
But if that Death should stop our breath,
"Why—*what is that to you?*"

The applanse being subsided, and also
the many pertinent allusions which the
Prince, my Lord of Southampton, and Sir
George Carew gave to it, Master Shak-
speare took the opportunity of privately
communicating some intelligence to his
highness, that seemed to interest him mar-
vellously. The subject was, that noble
gentleman, Sir Walter Raleigh, still a close
prisoner in the Tower, whom Master Shak-
speare, at the direction of the Prince, had
lately visited. He was the better able to
state what he was intent on without attract-
ing observation, as a conversation had
sprung up at the lower end of the table,
seeming of such interest as to engross the
attention of all but themselves. As what
passed was so strictly confidential, no part
of it has been handed down to these times,
the courteous reader must be content with
knowing that it was no doubt expressive of
the greatest possible sympathy for the illus-
trious hero, scholar, and gentleman, whom
fear and envy, in the most contemptible of
kings, had consigned to a dungeon. Leav-
ing the Prince and his friend to their pri-
vacy, the author will give him an insight
into the interesting subject discussing by
the rest of the Prince's guests.

"Never was there so beauteous a lady

in all Paris," said my Lord Southampton.
"Courtiers and citizens, for once in their
lives, were of one opinion, and united in
declaring the pre-eminence of her attrac-
tions."

"I faith that was a miracle at the least!"
exclaimed Sir George Carew.

"But the stories said of her beauty," contin-
ued the young nobleman, "were not half
so marvellous as those said of herself. The
popular version of her history varied every
day, but that which was most in repute,
spoke of her as a princess brought to their
city from some far kingdom in the East, by
a youthful Sultan of a neighboring state,
who had suddenly disappeared, without
leaving so much as the slightest clew by
which he might be traced."

"I will wager my George he had grown
tired of his princess, and had gone to get
him another," said Sir George. merrily.

"Some were of such an opinion," replied
the Lord Southampton, "but the majority
were of an opposite way of thinking. They
found it was clean impossible for any man
to have done so ungallant a thing. Her
beauty was of that excessive rareness, he
who had once felt its power could no more
tear him-self from it, than he could have
created it. It was the common rumor that
he must either have been hurried away pri-
vately to some secure hiding-place, by one
or other of the great nobles envious of his
exceeding good fortune, or slain outright
and made away with, by a vindictive rival,
intent on the most villainous courses to pos-
sess such ravishing perfections."

"What, kill a Sultan!" cried my Lord
of Pembroke, as he put a tall glass, of rare
workmanship, from his lips. "By this
hand, he deserveth the strappado!"

"I warrant you he is no man of Paris,"
observed Sir George, in a like tone. "They
prize such rare birds too well to make away
with one, unless it might be by killing him
with kindness."

"Of a truth, 'tis hardly credible," said
Sir Charles Cornwallis.

"Any great personage from a far-off
land, were he from the savagest state of
Africa, is sure of being sufficiently caressed
by those good people, out of their love for
what is new and strange."

"This may be, my masters; nevertheless
the young sultan was never more heard of,"
replied the Lord Southampton. "But the
strangest part of the story is yet to come.
After she had disappeared for some time,
and a score of new wonders had in their
turn outlived the marvelling of the people
of that famous city, she suddenly reappear-

ed at court. Some say she had superseded the Marchioness de Verneuil in the exceedingly comprehensive affections of the magnificent Henri Quatre ; others gave her to the Prince de Joinville, and not a few to the Duke de Guise ; but there were many who insisted on affirming much scandal relating to her in connexion with the name of the queen's confessor, the wily Richelieu, to whom they attributed the merit of her conversion to their holy religion from the errors of paganism and the knowledge of the French tongue."

"Monstrous!" exclaimed Sir George, laughing. "What, not content with a Christian queen!—did the holy man covet a heathenish princess? What very villainy!"

"Be assured it is a calumny," said Master Newton, who liked not to hear the character of a priest, of even an opposite faith, rudely assailed.

"Like enough," replied my Lord Southampton. "They are not quite so careful of what they say in that good city, that is out of all doubt. But certain it is that, for I know not quite how long, from the highest to the humblest, little was said except about her peerless beauty, her unparalleled extravagance, her magnificent banquets, her splendid palace, and her innumerable domestics. Not a song was written that was not to her praise; and, of all the newest oaths, you could only be in the highest fashion when swearing by the matchless splendor of the infinitely lustrous eyes of the incomparable Xariqua!"

"Xariqua!" exclaimed the young Lord Pembroke, with an air of utter astonishment, as soon as that familiar name met his ear.

The speaker continued, without noticing the interruption—

"The crowning marvel is yet to come."

"By this light, my lord, you are like a conjuror at a fair," cried Sir George Carew, very merrily; "you keep your greatest wonder for the last."

"Of a surety, this is an extraordinary lady," remarked Sir Thomas Newton, in a more serious tone; "yet she doth not appear to have been a very creditable one."

"Ah! Sir Thomas, credit is no commodity in this good city we are speaking of," replied Sir Charles Cornwallis. "One who hath the least character is sure there of getting on the best; and he that doth the most unwarrantable things, is more talked of than he hath the least chance of being were he one of the seven sages."

"But touching this crowning marvel," said my Lord of Southampton, "which it is

but proper you should have the benefit of. Know then that, after keeping the whole city in a ferment with her brave way of living, she suddenly disappeared; and, after incredible labor spent in tracing her retreat, it was discovered that she had fled to an encampment of Bohemians, or, as some call them, Rommanees, or gypsies, who had scarcely a day before made their appearance in the neighborhood. A deputation was despatched on the instant to the peerless Xariqua, to offer her two palaces, two innumerable trains of domestics, with permission to be twice as unparalleledly extravagant as she had hitherto been; but when, with their horses in a foam, they reached the spot that had been pointed out to them, not a vestige of a Bohemian or any other creature of any sort was to be seen; nor, though messengers were despatched in every direction throughout the kingdom, and most tempting rewards offered for any information that would lead to her recovery, was any one able ever to get sight of her in France again."

"A strange tale, o' my life!" exclaimed Sir George. Perceiving, for the first time, how closely connected with it was the young Earl of Pembroke, and wishing, with his natural good feeling, to spare him any embarrassment, he sought to change the discourse. "But strange tales are the natural property of every traveller. I remember one now——"

"But was nothing further heard of this singular woman, my lord?" inquired the prince's secretary.

"I' faith, yes, and in a manner which is not the least marvellous part of the business," replied the young noble. "A certain French nobleman, travelling on an embassy into the Low Countries about a month after, in one of the towns through which he was journeying, was stopped by a crowd who were fixed in admiration on the movements of a woman dancing in a style no less animated than graceful to some rude music. He stopped and looked on with the rest. The dancer, having finished her performance, comes to him for money; and prythee, if you can, imagine the noble count's consternation in discovering that the woman who in Paris had enjoyed all the state of a queen, had been displaying the graces which captivated the powerfulest princes of France, for a few coins drawn from the chance passengers in the dirty street of an obscure Flemish town."

"An extraordinary change," observed Master Newton. "But was it never explained?"

Sir George Carew saw it was useless attempting to stem the current of inquiry, and wisely desisted. The object of his regard, however, had in a great measure recovered the shock he had received, and was listening without any greater appearance of interest than the character of the narrative demanded.

"He questioned her," replied my Lord Southampton; "and she, after some hesitation, acknowledged that she was a Bohemian, and was so enamored of that wandering way of life, that she returned to it the first opportunity she had, and for no temptation would be induced to abandon it again. It then came out that she had carefully treasured up the dress she had been used to wear, throughout the whole of the time she had been queening it so bravely at Paris. The sight of this served to call her back to the free air of the forest, and the green nook, and the murmuring stream, that had been so long her familiar friends; and, when she heard that some of her people had arrived in the neighborhood, she put on her humble yet treasured garments, leaving all her jewels, velvets, satins, every coin of the large sum she had at her disposal, and all the luxuries she had so long enjoyed, and, like a bird escaped from a gilded cage, made off for the tents of the Bohemians, to fare coarsely and become a vagabond."

"Was it never known why and in what manner she had at first forsaken this so prized way of living?" inquired Sir Charles Cornwallis.

"On this point she would not give any direct information," said the other. "Yet it was generally rumored there had been a lover in the case, from whom, by some trick, she had been separated."

My Lord of Pembroke was inexpressibly relieved at this moment by hearing the voice of the Prince of Wales, challenging his guests to a bumper. The subject of their discourse was presently lost sight of; and, as if to make amends for the time that had been devoted to conversation, the Prince took care that sociality should rule paramount, and healths were drank, and songs sung with unabated spirit, many compliments being paid to Master Shakespeare by all the company, especially by their princely host, to which he responded in language worthy of himself, till, the hour getting late, the party broke up.

CHAPTER XXIX.

See'st thou not, in clearest days,
Oft thick fogs cloud heaven's rays:
And the vapors that do breathe
From the earth's gross womb beneath,
Seem they not with their black steams
To pollute the sun's bright beams,
And yet vanish into air,
Leaving it unblemished, fair?
So, my Willy, shall it be,
With Detraction's breath and thee.

GEORGE WITHER.

He is great and he is just,
He is ever good, and must
Thus be honored

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THERE were merry doings at Stratford. The whole town was astir, as with a new impulse. Such gossippings at street-corners—such visitings—such a commodity of endless questions, and seemingly equally endless answers—had never been known before. Mine host of the Twicken Bottle, in attending to the demands for intelligence from his numerous customers, made his throat so dry that he was fain to moisten it from the highest tankard every quarter of the hour at the least, to keep it from splitting; and Ralph, the barber, got so bewildered by the interminable catechism he had to endure from those of his townsmen whose beards he trimmed, that even his tongue, inured to as much clatter as the parish bells, became at last dumb from exhaustion. The baker allowed his batch to spoil while swallowing, with more zest than his hungriest patrons ever felt for anything of his handiwork, the surprising account brought to him by his journeyman and apprentice, who had heard the strange news from the chandler's son. The butcher allowed a long reprieve for the bound and panting sheep, while he made inquiries of the one-eyed water-carrier for the latest news of the all-engrossing subject. The blacksmith stopped his hammering, and almost let the forge-fire burn out, whilst listening to the last particulars of a travelling tinker. The aldermen and burgesses, in their town-hall, equally with the humblest of the beggars in the streets, seemed wonderfully interested in this strange matter.

And what think you was it that so completely turned one of the quietest towns in all England into one of the most active and talkative? Of a truth, it was no more than this: The fair mansion, known as New Place, which had remained so long tenantless, that all hope of its again becoming a dwelling seemed to have departed from the

minds of every inhabitant of the town, at last was enlivened with an owner, and this owner was no other than their excellent acquaintance and fellow-townsman, William Shakespeare.

But, of all the houses in Stratford town, there was not one to equal the amount of gossipping on this marvellous proper topic, that took place in that of the merry hatter and his buxom little helpmate. The topic was dear to both of them—Master Shakespeare possessing their love and reverence, to an extent it was impossible to exceed; therefore, all who had got any thing to say respecting him, were sure of a right honest welcome under their roof—always provided their speech was sufficiently respectful—for, if not, they stood a monstrous chance of being sent out of the house faster than they came in—a chance that had happened to more than one, as the three inveterate mischiefmakers, Aunt Breedbate, Aunt Pratepace, and Aunt Gadabout, had discovered to their exceeding sorrow.

Under this impression, the kitchen of Tommy Hart was filled with visitors, either desirous of telling or of hearing something concerning the object of the general talk. There was Jonas Tietape in his motliest wear, the little dogs, as usual, ever and anon peering and yelping out of his great pockets, when any vagary, more violent than the rest, disturbed them in their hiding-place; and, as usual, he was keeping the company in an incessant roar, by the strange freaks of his wild fancies—grimacing, posturing, tumbling, juggling, and singing old snatches of ridiculous songs, as though he must needs be doing some out-of-the-way thing or other, or cease to live.

There, too, came Dick Quiney, in his roughest suit, full of strange oaths and monstrous unpolished speech, like a mariner after a three years' voyage. With him was Cuthbert Dredger, the old miller; his hair and beard and suit of friar's gray covered with meal; and there was his son, in all things his very fac-simile, even to his style of speech; and there also was Jasper Broadfoot, the sturdy ploughman, with his huge honest face, bearing unanswerable testimony of his extreme satisfaction. These, with the merry hatter himself, in a merrier trim than ever, constituted the male part of the company.

The women consisted of the laughing Joan, who had not lost so much as an atom of her overwhelming good nature; her buxom kinswoman, Judith, no longer the desperate shrew she was, for 't faith, the shrew had been tamed so absolutely, that there never

was a more excellent obedient wife, quiet and modest withal, as a good wife should ever be. With them was Goody Poppet with a face like a harvest moon—always excepting the matter of the triple chin. The two maypoles, starched and stiffened, and looking like a couple of ninepins left standing after a successful cast of the bowl amongst their fellows; and Peg o' the Twicken Bottle, with such a dextrous use of her somewhat sinister looks, as made it marvellous she had not become a Peg for some of her admirers to hang himself on withal, the which would most certainly have been, had it not been thought by all the better sort that she was a Peg too low.

As none of these worthies had much acquaintance with the rare gift of holding their tongues, as pretty a confusion of voices was going as might have been produced in a rookery by a sudden shot. The sole subject and object of this Babel was the new tenant of New Place. Some of them had been enabled to obtain intelligence of matters respecting him and his establishment, of which the others were clean ignorant, and their interest in him would have made them good listeners, had not their eagerness in asking questions far outspent their patience to hear the answers. Some had been so fortunate as to see him; and wondrous appeared the result of their interview. At last the notion seemed to be gaining ground that the best way of becoming acquainted with the strange matters their more fortunate associates were communicating, was to allow the latter to speak their minds uninterruptedly. They, therefore, grouped round the principal speakers, and, saving a due allowance of eager interjections and judicious comments, appeared disposed to become respectable listeners.

"To think that Ragged Launce should have been taken into favor!" observed the ploughman, in a sort of amazement, "a thoughtless, idle varlet, that knoweth not so much as the coulter from the furrow it turns over."

"Not so fast, good Jasper, I prythee," said Tommy Hart. "Ragged Launce will not now answer to his title. He hath since been styled 'Lazy Launce'; but methinks he shall now rejoice under the style of 'Bragging Launce'; for he be ever telling you the wonderfullest brags concerning his adventures beyond the sea, that can be conceived."

"He it is, then, that is to look to the beasts?" inquired the old miller.

"By the bunghole of the cask of Bacchus!" exclaimed young Quiney, "he can-

not look to one requiring more looking to than himself."

"But commend me to the varlet whom Master Shakspeare hath brought with him as his steward," observed Tommy Hart, with a chuckle. "When I said to him, 'Simon Stockfish,' quoth I, 'wilt take a draught?' he fixed on me a wonderful penetrating look, as though he thought my civility intolerably suspicious, and, with a grave face, informed me he would think of it."

"An ass of a notable breed, o' my life!" added Jonas Tietape, "for I have good reason for knowing he thinketh himself three parts fox. Nevertheless, with all his humor of subtlety, the plainest trap that ever was set shall hold him fast, though he be so on the guard, he fancieth snares in every body's speech."

"We will take the fox out of him before he is many days older, I promise you," said Joan, laughingly. "I am no woman, if I fail to make him stand confessed the goodly breed he is, ere our acquaintance be thoroughly ripened."

Affairs of such importance soon began to be discussed, and of such interest too, that even Jonas Tietape left off his vagaries to take part in the conversation. Tommy Hart had spoken to the aldermen and burgesses about holding a festival, and having all sorts of country games in the town, in honor of their worthy Master Shakspeare: and as they determined Stratford should produce all that was most attractive in the way of revels, every one of the company felt bound to do his or her best to afford amusement. The question was, what shape should this amusement assume. Various sports were then thought of, and each in turn discussed; every one giving an opinion for some favorite. There were advocates for Coventry Plays; for mock tournaments; for mumming; for a morrice; for a chase after a soaped pig; for a bear baiting; for a badger hunt; for chuck farthing; and for divers other approved sports of a similar sort.

At last it seemed settled, that nothing could be chosen so likely to do honor to their distinguished townsman as a play; and although to other sports they might also have recourse, a play they determined should be the great feature of the day. On this decision being come to, Jonas Tietape put himself forward to arrange not only the particular play, but the particular way in which it should be played, and the particular persons who were to share in its performance. Considering they had got

neither scenery nor wardrobe, the company appeared less doubtful of their resources than might have been expected: but this was the result of the superlative confidence of their leader, who acted the part of each in turn, showing how marvellous well it might be done, after a fashion that was a marvel indeed.

Jonas took immeasurable pains to instruct his associates, who were not all of them so apt at their lessons as they might have been. This, let it be observed, was the first of several meetings of the same kind, when the same lessons were repeated, and the assistance of other worthies procured to help out the personation of the various characters that were to speak on this momentous occasion. But, leaving them to arrange such business in their own way, we must at once to higher game.

As the reader hath already learned, Master Shakspeare had returned to his native town, a prosperous if not a happy man. That he left London with some reluctance is exceeding probable. There he had achieved his first triumphs; had secured his best friends; there he had obtained the flattering notice of one of the noblest of created beings, whose attentions were regarded by him as honors, to which those of Czars and Cæsars were empty and puerile. He had been driven forth out into the wide ocean of the world without chart or compass, stores, or necessaries of any sort by which the fearless mariner might contend out the fiercest storms, and had found there a port in which he had rode at anchor for many years in safety and honor, whilst others, seemingly better provided, had been cast away.

London and her multitudes, therefore, might well be dear to him. He was grateful, he was proud, he was happy in the greatness they had brought him; and it was with a sighing breast and dimmed eyes, he left the crowds of warm friends and honest admirers its numberless streets contained. But with one individual, the parting was more difficult than with all the others put together, or even a thousand times their sum; and, such are the marvellous freaks of human nature, this one was no other than his quondam scholar, my Lord of Pembroke, from whom he had more trouble than every other besides. It is not in the art of poor words to express the depth of his feelings in being obliged to tear himself from an object that had lately become the very principle of his life. He, however, knew the huge necessity there was for this forced separation, and with a swelling heart school-

ed himself into a proper affectation of indifference.

If there was regret in leaving a place in which he had been made so rich in friends, there was much of the same feeling awaited him on his return to a place where all he had known of sorrow and humiliation had visited him. The wound may have healed, which the death of his sweet young son had created; and that equally painful blow which had annihilated his domestic happiness may have ceased to give any very acute pain; but there were times when they would not bear touching, and these times the scenes that every day met his gaze seemed to bring before him. But if he had his discomforts in this return to a spot which, whatever of pain or disappointment there was with it, he had his pleasures also: the satisfaction which his coming to dwell among his townspeople gave to one and all, filled him with a peculiar satisfaction. For the rude but honest affection of the company that assembled in the kitchen of Tommy Hart, he had a deeper sympathy than for his popularity with the gay butterflies of the court of King James.

But the great source of his gratification was his most admirable fair daughter. Susanna had become his companion and friend. With her he was wont to visit the old familiar faces that had haunted him so often in his dreams—the favorite walks, and views, and resting-places in and about Stratford, where, during the vernal spring of his fruitful life, he had learned so many lessons of beauty, purity, and love, that he had since reproduced in materials as indestructible as the pyramids, and as intelligent as the stars.

She gave earnest attentiveness to all such reminiscences—they were to her as the revelations of an oracle. But at times he felt somewhat disappointed in her hearing. It was kind, considerate, soothing, full of exquisite comfort and consolation: but a sensible change seemed lately to have passed over her. She was no longer the creature of life and light he had seen her at the French Court. Perhaps, thought he, she cannot reconcile herself to the sudden alteration of her position—from being one of the brightest ornaments of the brilliant court of Henri Quatre, where all eyes were upon her and all hearts at her devotion, to be the repository of melancholy thoughts, and receive no other courtesies than might fall from a solitary in a small provincial town in England. He entertained some hopes that this gloom might be removed in due course of time. He would

take care to secure her amusement and society more worthy of her time of life.

Poor Susanna! There was indeed a change in her. Her buoyant nature, that, like the brighter glories of the sky, came upon your vision floating in an atmosphere of its own light, had received so rude a shock, that nothing but the possession of that steadfastness of spirit, which, in persons so excellently disposed, bears up against the rudest shock of evil, could have enabled her to keep her proper place, and retain her proper part. A settled melancholy had possessed her—the light and graceful gaiety, which had thrown around her natural gentleness and modesty so winning a charm, had given way to a gravity almost solemn. But it was not any yearning after the lost splendors of Paris life, that had created in her so painful a gravity. Of a truth, so far from it, she was right glad she was well quit of the place, and all its hollow pleasures. Nor would the sunshine, which her courteous admirer, Sir George Carew, was preparing to fling across her path, penetrate, to the slightest extent, the deep shadow by which, in her idea, she was surrounded.

What had caused this shadow to fall there was no telling—the discreet Susanna kept a strict silence. Her father asked her no questions. His quick eye perceived the change, but mistook the cause. Yet, had this been otherwise, he respected her too much to have attempted to pry into a secret she seemed inclined to preserve.

On her part, whatever gloom may have overspread her mind, she felt bound to conceal it as much as possible from her indulgent parent, and oftentimes took upon herself the humor of pleasantry, as if she had not a care she need trouble herself about. She appeared to take a sensible interest in the approaching revels, and put some touch of liveliness upon her speech, whilst she descended on the infinite pleasure it would afford to the worthy people of all the neighboring villages. Nevertheless, she would have liked nothing so well as hearing it abandoned—or that she could in any way escape appearing there. Yet, of all strange matters, this seemed the most unaccountable—for, next to her father, whom she revered above all human creatures, and loved with an affectionateness akin to worship, she regarded the gallant Sir George Carew, and his equally kind and considerate lady, who had been active in planning and settling all the necessary arrangements.

Far and near, for many miles, these approaching revels had become the favorite

theme of every idle tongue. As the day they were to be held drew near, there was no subject so generally discussed, and every one seemed to be making extraordinary preparations for a visit to Stratford.

At Shottery this was especially the case ; and, at the cottage, the three aunts seemed to be talking themselves into a fever. Aunt Gadabout had been to Welford Wake, to Bidford Whitsun Ale, to a hurling at Fulbrooke, to a wedding at Charlote, and to a christening at Bidford ; yet she looked forward to her jaunt to Stratford as to a pleasure that cometh but once in a way. Aunt Prateapace had heard a world and all of gossip concerning Giles of Binton and the parson's maid ; had managed to get even on the right scent respecting the seeret visits of Tom the Piper, to the widow at Bardon Hill ; and had ferretted out the reason why the young squire went so frequently to Wellesbourn Wood ; nevertheless, her talk was all of Stratford, of what was doing, and what was to be done. Aunt Breedbate ceased to inveigh against the horrible tyranny of Batch, the baker, to his prentices, though she had succeeded in persuading the latter that they were monstrously ill-used, because they had puddings, no more than thrice a week ; and made no boast of having caused her neighbor, Hunks, the carrier, to turn his only son out of doors ; she, too, could find no other matter for speech than all that she knew or guessed of Stratford Revels, in which she quarrelled with her sisters no more than some half score times during the hour.

The old and favorite source of their united mischief-making and bickerings, hugely to their discontent, they had for some time past been denied. Their kinswoman would hear no more of their meddling in anything that related either to her "villainous husband," or her "horrible infamous children." Indeed a marvellous change had taken place in her. She remained at home from morn till eve—took no concern in the affairs of those around her, and cared not for the visits of any of her gossips ; the more especially for those of her loving aunts. No one knew but herself how the weary hours were employed ; but it might have been guessed that they were none so pleasant, as her looks were not those of one whose privacie was happiness. She would not be induced to go to Stratford, but let her kinswomen depart without her ; and then shut herself in her chamber, in the same gloomy humor in which, of late, she was commonly to be found.

Bright gleamed the golden sunshine on the day of the Stratford Revels, and from

every village and town for miles round—not only from Bidford, Wixford, Exhall, Alcester, Great Alne, Aston-Cantlow, Snitterfield, Barford, and Wasperton—a distance of some five or six miles or so—but even from Evesham, Warwick, Coventry, and Worcester, from ten to thirty miles, came horsemen, ay, and divers stout footmen, to enjoy the sports that had so long been talked of over the whole country. They came pouring into the town in every accessible direction, but over Clopton Bridge they pressed like an invading army. They passed under the famous triumphal arches made of flowers and evergreens, which had been erected at the bidding of the corporation across the principal streets, where as famous companies of musicians as all Warwickshire could produce were stationed, making such a glorious piping, trumpeting, and drumming, as none ever heard before. Much they talked as they passed along, concerning that marvellous man, for whom fortune and fame had done such wondrous things, and of whom every group possessed some one or more who could, of his own knowledge, testify to the strangest matters that ever befel one of mortal nature. Be sure they had scores of eager listeners. He who could tell some unheard-of tale of his estimation among great lords and princes, of which he had himself seen ample warrant, ensured for himself the consequence of their chief and director during the rest of the journey ; but he whom chance and a good memory had furnished recollections of certain glorious plays, seen in London or elsewhere, was regarded by his associates, from that time forward, as a friend to be proud of.

The high bailiff, with the powerful backing of Sir George Carew, had taken especial care that due provision should be made for the sustenance and refreshment of all comers during the day. Nearly every house had a bush over the door, where a good draught of ale or cider might be had almost for the asking ; and there had been more boiling, roasting, and baking in the town, during the last three days, than had been for a full twelve months passed : so that he that was tired, athirst, or ahungered, had only to turn into the first open door, and might be sure of getting all he desired.

For the gentry, other arrangements had been made. New Place had been so rarely garnished with green boughs and gay flowers, that not a foot of the front could be seen ; and within was the same dainty display in every possible direction : for the which gay work the humblest poor person, as well as the wealthiest burgesses, had joyfully contributed. But there was store

of other things—tables were laid out in the hall, and over them was such bountiful store of good eating and drinking, as, so it seemed, might suffice for a garrison to sustain a seven years' siege. The high bailiff also kept open house—so did the vicar—and so did the chiefest aldermen. The inns were as admirably well provided: and there were also spacious covered booths erected in various directions, with flags and goodly branches at top, whereof some showed such a commodity of good victual as the whole town could not have supplied at another time—others were for dancing; wherein could be had wine, or ale, or cider, in such plenty as it was a marvel to see.

The fame of these revels had brought all sorts of mountebanks, pedlars, ballad-singers, conjurors, masters, of puppets, exhibitors of monsters, quack-doctors, and the like sort of folk, who, in every street, were to be seen pursuing their vocations, infinitely to the amusement of the rustics. This kept the immense multitude from crowding too much in one place, which the corporation had likewise endeavored to avoid by causing different attractive sports to be going on at the same time—some within the town and some without.

On the road to Shottery there was to be a hurling-match—on that to Bidford, a bulldaing—close to the chapel of the Guild was to be a game at barley-break—near the church, a cudgel-play—provision for shooting at the butts in one field, and for running at the quintain in another—a badger-hunt on the Avon—a jumping-match in the meadows—by the elm, at the Dovehouse Close end, in the Henley Road, a maypole for a dance—and at the opposite boundary, the two elms in the Mesham highway a bonfire. There was also to be every thing as at a May-day—Robin Hood and Maid Marian—Hobby-horse and St. George and the Dragon—and, greatest of all attractions, in the most open place in all the town, was set up a stage, in which was to be represented the exceeding admirable, most moving, and very delectable choice pageant of “The Nine Worthies.”

But now there is a cheerful sound of trumpets, and it is made known that the corporation are going in procession from the Town Hall to New Place, and presently there is a vast show of running and scrambling. The high bailiff, in the garb of his office, descends from his horse, and enters Master Shakspeare's dwelling, amid a flourish of trumpets and a great shout of applause, to invite him and his exquisite fair daughter, in the name of the people of Stratford, to see all the goodly sports that

have been provided for their especial honor and delectation; and, presently, he is seen bringing forth Master Shakspeare; whereupon there is set up so main a cry, and so piercing a flourish, that thousands are seen hurrying to the spot in every direction. Master Shakspeare acknowledgeth the applause with such gracefulness and nobleness of bearing as speedily brought it forth with double strength. The whilst he was so engaged, there was brought up to his door a most stately steed, caparisoned as for a king, which had been provided by his loving friends for his accommodation. He leaped into the saddle, and held his seat with so commanding an air, doffing his beaver courteously to all around, as the proud beast curveted and pranced his best paces, as though knowing what inestimable honor he bore, that the hurraing was renewed and continued as if never to end.

Amid there appeared at the door the figure of the gentle Susanna, looking, from the flush of affection and pride, in seeing her father so honored, that spread over her delicate features, more lovely than ever she had been. She seemed for a moment overpowered by the tumultuous greeting that awaited her; but this speedily passed, and, with one graceful recognition, assisted by the ever-gallant Sir George, she leaped upon the noble steed that had been provided for her, and, by her noble horsemanship, was winning the hearts of the vast masses that thronged to every point, window or house-top, that could command a view of what was going on.

A number of the gentlefolks of the neighborhood, of both sexes, next appeared; who, having mounted their horses, the procession started from New Place in the following order—

Constables of the watch.

Twenty-four poor men of Stratford, belonging to the alms-houses, in blue coats.

Scholars of the Free-School—where Master Shakspeare had received his learning—two abreast.

Vicar and Schoolmaster.

The different trades, with their banners.

Trumpeters—followed by the great banner of St. George and the Dragon, like unto that famous representation on the chapel of the Guild.

The high bailiff, on horseback.

The two churchwardens, a-foot. Also the aldermen and other officers of the corporation, two and two.

Another great banner, bearing the arms of England united with Scotland.

A company of musicians, playing joyful tunes.

MASTER SHAKSPEARE, on a tall horse, richly caparisoned. By his side, **MISTRESS SUSANNA SHAKSPEARE**, riding in a like manner.

Ladies and gentlewomen, on prancing palfreys.

Knights and gentlemen of the neighbourhood, all riding.

Yeomen of Stratford and the Hamlets of Shottery, Drayton, Little Wilmecote, and Bishopston—every man on his own horse.

Serving-men of the gentry, in their coats and badges, a-foot.

A great banner of the cross.

Two trumpeters.

Constables of the watch.

As the procession passed through the principal streets, there was such a general craning of necks from opened casements and crowded house-tops, doorways, and every other convenient place, and such shouting and hurring, and waving of hats and handkerchiefs, as was truly wonderful to see and hear. There was no lack of comment on the personal appearance of both the principal personages, nor was there any lack of admiration. Of their feelings, nothing can be said to make them sufficiently understood. Master Shakspeare felt elated—of a surety, the sight that presented itself to him was sufficient to have exalted the most earthborn of mortals: but the satisfaction arose less from gratified vanity than from a love of that kindness that seemed the moving spirit of the whole scene.

It was not till he passed by the well-remembered house in Henley Street, that his feelings seemed to be getting the mastery. He thought of the estimable hearts at rest, under the churchyard turf, that would have rejoiced beyond all mortal joy to have seen that day: and, for one, what a day of honor it would have been held, had not the destroyer, so prematurely, cut him off from the world he was so well fitted to adorn!

He was aroused from an unhappy reverie by a fresh burst of plaudits, which brought his thoughts into a more agreeable channel.

Susanna rode by his side with a swelling heart. She seemed entirely oblivious of her own peculiar ideas and sensations—and she had much to forget. She thought and felt only for her father. She had always been proud of him, but now her pride had in it something so reverential, it looked like an angelic appreciation of immortal excellence. They passed on, viewing with infinite contentation the arrangements that had been made for the enjoyment of the people of the different revels. They beheld several in full operation. Most, however,

had suspended their operations to obtain a view of the approaching procession, but they saw enough to know how well everything had been managed.

They now drew near to the spot where the stage had been erected, and were soon marshalled within view of it; the footmen being placed in front, and the horsemen behind. Here they had been but a brief space, when the grand and wonderful pageant commenced with the appearance on the stage of three marvellous ill-visaged, ill-shaped, ill-clad personages, in turbans and sandals, with monstrous long beards, who, in rare ranting speech, proceeded to proclaim to their audience that they were the three Hebrew worthies, Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabeus—they spoke some exceeding fine-tutian sentences, and made no small exertions to appear to perfection the heroes of Israel, albeit they were but indifferent Christians, that answered to the names of Jasper Broadfoot, Cuthbert Dredger, and his son.

When they had ranted sufficiently about their distinguished names and deeds, they made off—and presently they were succeeded by three as odd-looking varlets as ever were met within the world, in helmets, having naked feet with sandals, and an odd kind of drapery thrown over their naked shoulders. Their very appearance was the signal for a burst of mirth that seemed to shake the whole town. First came the mighty Hector, and a rare hectoring blade he proved himself. He swore pretty roundly there was not so fine a fellow of his inches any where, and that he had just come from the walls of Troy at the rate of a sheriff's post, to show the whole world what matchless choice spirits there were in the old times. In sooth, he talked big enough; yet, for all his fine feathers, he was no other than the reader's politic friend, Simon Stockfish, who, after due deliberation, had, at a pressing request, lent his excellent powers to seueare a proper performance of the pagant.

Next came a fellow who seemed full as broad as he was long; yet his length was little better than that of a dwarf, and in his bullet head appeared a brace of open jaws that looked to be ready to devour any one of the company inclined to test his powers of swallow. When he declared, in the highest sounding phrase, that he was Julius Caesar, there was a laugh among all such as had any acquaintance with that worthy. Nevertheless, he strutted, and grimaced, and vaporized for an intolerable long time, concerning his valorous doings; few there

would have taken him for Julius Caesar, but if there had been any doubt on the matter amongst the townspeople, it must have ceased when, in the midst of one of his most tearing speeches, from two cavities or pockets below his girdle, sprung forth the heads of two little dogs, who set up such a yelping, that Julius Caesar stopped sudden short in his heroics, and with two smart pats on their heads, the voice of Jonas Tietape bade them "get in, and be hanged!"

At his heels came a like sort of knave, about the same height, but not so stout; albeit, however small he was in his inches, he, too, was a famous tall fellow with his tongue. He made it out that he had conquered the world; and by his bearing it was plain to be seen, in his own conceit, he could do it again as easy as he could drink off a pint of small ale. But, let him have bragged till doomsday, it was plain enough, Alexander the Great was but Tommy Hart the Little.

These three having departed, there appeared another lot of a like number, to make up the nine; and, however the Jews and Indians had bestirred themselves in this business, these three, who came as Christians, in full suits of armor, outerowed them all to nothing. It came out that they were no other than King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Boulogne. King Arthur had got a squint, and was lame of a leg, that inarked him for the constable of the watch; and Godfrey of Boulogne was high-shouldered, and spoke with a cracked voice, nobody would have owned but the schoolmaster. As for the illustrious and very absolute valiant potentate the great Charlemagne, by some chance or other, ere he had spoke many lines, he wanted prompting. Charlemagne the great, it was soon observed was gifted with a wonderful little memory. He hardly knew who he was—clean forgot what he had done, and could not for the life of him say why he was there. The spectators made many sharp remarks on this strange failing in Charlemagne—and at last, things growing worse, the great man was so badgered that he scarce knew which way to turn.

When the public disapproval of him began at last to show they would bear with him no longer, he presently opened his helmet and threw it aside, swearing pretty roundly to the crowd beneath him, "He was none of Charley Main, but only simple Launcelot Curmose, Master Shakspeare's boy, and he didn't care a flea for the nine worthies, or any of their generation."

In simple truth, Launce had been too

busy with the tankard, and had become pot-valiant. This burst of indignation set the whole audience laughing, and in this merry mood concluded the "exceeding, admirable, most moving, and very delectable choice pageant of the Nine Worthies."

Certes, Master Shakspeare found no slight degree of amusement in this performance; he often discovered himself wishing that honest Ned Allen, Dick Burbage, or any other of the great London players could see how choicely the players of Stratford employed the resources of their art; and he could have laughed right earnestly, had he not remembered that, however burlesque was the playing, the players were honest hearts, whose sole aim was to do him honor. Thus influenced, it was no marvel he expressed himself exceeding gratified with every part of it.

After this the procession moved on, and in turn visited the scene of the rest of the Stratford Revels, with the which he was equally well pleased.

An important feature in the day's festivities, was a grand banquet at the Guildhall, mostly at the expense of the Corporation; where they feasted their illustrious townsmen and his friends right sumptuously; many handsome things being said of him, to which he replied in a tone of earnest thankfulness that did famously express his sense of the honor they did him. When this was over, Sir George Carew, with more tender gallantry than any of his juniors could have used, must needs lead off the first dance with his fair favorite, Mistress Susanna. They kept it up till a late hour, having all the most approved dances, and every admired tune; and when the time for parting could no longer be delayed, it was said of all—both such as came from a distance, and by those living in the neighborhood—that, in their memory, there had been nothing in the county that afforded such excellent desport as these Stratford Revels; and it was the general desire that on the twenty-third of every succeeding April, the town should be rendered attractive by a similar entertainment.

CHAPTER XXX.

Hark hither, reader ! wilt thou see
Nature her own physician be ?
Wilt see a man all his own wealth,
His own music, his own health ;
A man whose sober soul can tell
How to wear her garments well ?

CRASHAW.

MASTER SHAKSPEARE had, by this time, become settled in his new position. His mansion was large and commodious, and he had taken good care that in it he should be surrounded with such comforts and accommodations as he most liked. There was his library full of choice authors, with here and there a rare specimen of old armor, that recalled the glories of the Black Prince, and the triumphs of Henry of Monmouth. There, too, was a goodly hall, with no lack of helmets, swords, and bucklers around the walls ; a dining parlor, with well-carved furniture and handsome panels, with a few choice old portraits ; a "blue chamber," so called from being hung with arras of that color ; a "paradise," bearing this designation in consequence of its having the story of our first parents, to their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, done in German water-colors on the walls ; a "yellow chamber," styled so from its yellow hangings, and divers others, distinguished in a like manner by some peculiarity in the character of the furniture. There was also ample accommodation in the way of buttery, kitchen, and the like sort of places, with stable, and a choice garden.

The chamber he most affected was the one used as a common refectory. It was distinguished by a bay window, and a most capacious chimney-corner. Here in his high chair he loved to sit, surrounded by admiring friends, who affected nothing so well in the long winter nights as to get him in the humor of telling stories ; and numberless narratives, of wonderful interest, did he narrate to that enviable circle. There were tales of all hues and complexions, to suit all manner of tastes and inclinations ; tales of all countries and of all times ; yet each marked with the same marvellous invention, that kept the rapt hearers in a very ecstasy of mingled pleasure and wonder, till they had deeply encroached into their ordinary hours of rest.

When he chose to seek relief from his in-door amusements, he looked after his lands and herds as attentively as any yeoman in Warwickshire. If it pleased him better, he would mount his horse ; and, with

the fair Susanna riding by his side, each with a favorite bird, would enjoy the delectable sport of hawking. Or, mayhap, he might be ready for any other pastime that looked to be most ready for him. His garden and his farm seemed to possess for him inexhaustible resources ; and, next to them in interest, he regarded a cheerful ride or walk into any of the most pleasant places in the neighborhood.

He daily grew into more esteem with his honest townsmen and neighbors, and was much talked of for many miles round, not so much in relation to the great gifts which had secured him his great name, but rather as one Squire Shakspeare of Stratford. In truth the character of squire suited him as well as it would any who had been born in it ; and so it is palpable would any other, let it have been of whatsoever rank or station it could have possessed.

He had been appointed to the honorable office of justice of peace ; and, having had his hall in New Place turned into a justice-room, it was his wont, with certain assistants of his, to examine such offenders as were brought before him. Frequently would he so admonish the evil-doers that they straightway abandoned their vile courses, and became of a notable honesty ever after. He saved many from the commission of base offences ; and those notorious malefactors he was obliged to condemn, he did so in so impressive a fashion, they presently clean repented of their infamy, and took to better behaving from that time forth. In brief, the fame of his justice, and his skill in finding out the intricatest matters, spread so every day, that he became looked upon as the chief judge of such offences in those parts ; so that it was seldom he had not his hands full of it.

He sat in his chair of worship, which he filled with no lack of dignity, his person being now full and portly—mayhap the combined results of good living and of good nature—Sir George Carew sitting near, who shared in such business whenever he could ride over from his own house ; and Simon Stockfish over-against them acting as clerk, who occasionally ventured on giving a hint in the way of deep policy, which, though profiting no one, was sure of being taken in good part. Launce had been promoted to the office and dignity of crier of the court, the which he filled to marvellous admiration, allowing of no noise or disturbance of any sort, save what he made himself, which was sure to be enough, in all conscience, for all the rest of the company. There were also certain constables,

to wit, young Quiney, of whose discretion and diligence in his office Master Shakspeare entertained an excellent proper opinion; Tommy Hart, who, an he could be serious, would have arrested any offender that came in his way; but he was so ready to crack a jest with him, instead of proceeding with such serious matter, that it was scarce safe to put him on such office alone. To these were added Jasper Broadfoot, and old Cuthbert Dredger and his son, who were then grouped together, a short way from where Master Shakspeare and his friend were disengaging some favorite subject with marvellous earnestness.

At this period the reader's familiar acquaintance Launce, the crier of the court, who looked on himself as little less in dignity than his worship, shouted out in his most worshipful tone, "One to speak with his worship!" and immediately afterwards there appeared at the door a female, humbly clad and closely veiled, attended by Susanna and her sister on each side of her.

"A plain case this," said Master Shakspeare, in an under-tone. "These two jades of mine take under their protection all the amiable offenders and interesting criminals they can hear of; and, forsooth, I am to stand godfather for their misdemeanors."

"None so well, Will—none so well," replied Sir George, merrily. "There are so many of thine own to answer for, that a few, more or less, need not trouble thee."

"Let her not come any nearer, I pray you," earnestly whispered Simon Stockfish, across the table, interposed between them. "She, perchance, may have some dangerous weapon hid about her: if she be made to stop where she is, there need be no fear of her using it to any fatal purpose."

Thereupon he made a particular movement with his head to Launce, who appeared to understand its import on the instant, for he repeated it to certain of the constables, who, quite as quickly on the alert, presently drew nigher to the prisoner, or petitioner, or whatever she was; so that, had she offered any violence, they could have pounced upon her before she could have done mischief. But the person who had thus engrossed their regards seemed in no case for any deed of desperation. If it was not for her fair supporters, she must have fallen to the ground, her steps seemed so monstrous weak and irresolute. She trembled violently, and her sobs were deep and frequent. She paused a few moments, and seemed as though she desired to go back, but a few words from her kind conductors appeared to give her additional

strength. She continued advancing, but it was evident that her emotion increased wonderfully.

"Merit reduced to beg; or, misfortune forcing an unwilling petitioner," observed Master Shakspeare to his friend, as he began to regard her with considerable interest.

"Well, well, Master Justice," said the other, who also looked favorably in the same direction, "in such cases, it is easy enough to see to which side the scale leans; and, she being a woman, she is entitled to the most liberal dealing of that most worshipful member of her sex, the blind lady, whose office you have been called upon to fulfil."

All this time, Simon Stockfish was fidgeting on his seat, his eyes now dwelling with no small degree of alarm upon the advancing female—anon, winking and pointing at the constables, who were all close at hand, in a remarkable state of vigilance.

"Well, dame?" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, gently. "Whatever may be your cause, you have taken care to provide yourself with such counsel as the judge is pretty sure to listen to with some favorableness."

No reply was given to this assurance—unless it was offered in the increasing sobs, which came from the person to whom it was directed. The gentlemen seemed affected, and even the constables looked somewhat bewildered.

"Prythee, come nearer, dame!" said Master Shakspeare, in a still kinder voice. "Perchance you may have something to tell me in confidence. Be assured you will find me anxious to afford you any reasonable assistance, and all proper sympathy."

At this the sobbing increased wonderfully; but never a word was spoke. Master Shakspeare was almost inclined to think that it was a case of crime, followed by deep remorse. He looked steadily at her; but, from the thickness of her veil, could make out nothing but a drooping head, a heaving breast, and a trembling form. Both Susanna and Judith had occasionally addressed words of encouragement to her in an under-tone, but they ceased to produce any beneficial results. At last the elder spoke.

"I have ventured, sweet sir," said she, "to bring hither, at her most urgent prayer and solicitation, one who is deeply sensible of certain unworthinesses by her committed, when her heart and mind was clean innocent of any knowledge whatsoever of the nature and extent of her ill-doing."

"If sincere repentance of what ill she hath done," added the younger sister, impressively, "for which others are more accountable than herself, may be considered a

claim, of a surety, dear father, she hath admirable grounds for being indulgently dealt with in this state."

"I am ever right glad," said her worthy parent, "to hear of a turning back to the right path, when any deviation hath been made from it. If it be in my power to set your mind at ease, be content, I pray you; I will insure you every consolation your case admits of. But, an it so please you, I would fain see your features. In a business of this sort, such mystery is by no means desirable."

At this the trembling and the sobbing became more violent than ever. The party had approached close to Master Shakspeare, to a vast increase to the fears and doubts of Simon Stockfish, who, with his mind in a whirl at the imminency of the danger, was racking his brain, to discover some politic plan of removing his honored master out of the way. Sir George Carew looked on the ground with singular interest—so gallant a heart as was his was alive in a moment to the distresses of a woman; and he felt the more sympathy from seeing the amiable part played in it by his fair friends, Susanna and Judith.

Master Shakspeare gently attempted to lift up the veil—to which no resistance was made; and as he did so, the wearer of it fell on her knees before him, in an agony of tears and sobs. He started back, overcome as it were, with extreme astonishment. There knelt before him, as a suppliant and a penitent, the creator of his earliest and sweetest pleasures—the originator of his early griefs and miseries. She knelt not alone; her two daughters knelt on each side of her, and all, in the mute eloquence of tears, prayed for forgiveness.

Sir George Carew could look on no longer; on pretence of brushing back the hair from his forehead, he removed from his eyes the abundant moisture that there suddenly started forth. Simon Stockfish, in despair of devising any stroke of policy to meet the occasion, was on the point of rushing forward to seize upon the suspected assassin, when he became transfixed with wonderment—staring with open mouth like one beholding a ghost. Not less of marvelling was seen in the countenances of the constables; and one or two turned aside their heads, and drew their sleeves across their eyes.

What a flood of subduing recollections rushed upon the mind of Master Shakspeare, at the sight of that still lovely face! The exquisite sweet pleasure of early love, and all the bewildering trances of passion and

romance it brings in its train—the admirable influence of a faith strong as life, in the existence of the most complete perfectness in womankind—the deep and ennobling sympathy which, whilst it exalts the object of preference to the dignity of a saint, places the admirer in the privileged position of a devotee—all pressed upon him at one and the same moment. He thought not of things evil, as arising out of this overgrowth of grateful feeling, like fungi spreading at the base of the noblest plants of the verdant forest—he saw before him the Anne Hathaway of his happiest hours, the wife of his bosom, the mother of his children, and the partner of his cares and sorrows, ere both had become intolerably familiar to him, and caught the trembling penitent in his arms to hush her tears and terrors, on the breast from which she had too long, by her own sentence, been banished.

This blessed event had been brought about by the judicious and affectionate management of Susanna and Judith—though the former had much the largest share in it. Scarcely had she returned to Stratford, when, unknown to any one, she made for the cottage at Shottery, where, if a rough reception awaited her, she contrived, by good management, to get it passed over without any ill consequences; and, taking advantage of the absence of the three harpies, who were as usual Juaning it together some few miles off, she commenced her advances towards the object nearest her heart. They were less ill received than she had expected; and, at her next visit, which she so timed as to avoid her aunts, she pushed forward more boldly, with such satisfactory results, that, on the next occasion of her coming, she took Judith with her, and their united representations and entreaties effected every thing that was desired.

Aunt Prateapace managed to gain intelligence of the reconciliation, and hastened with her two allies to their kinswoman to use all their influence to prevent it; but, when they arrived at the cottage, there were persons there they little expected meeting. Master Shakspeare had gladly proceeded to the dwelling, which had so often rose up in his reveries to bring him pleasant remembrances of the pleasant hours he had once known in it, and a large party of humble friends had been collected to welcome him back to his old threshold. When the three mischief-makers made their appearance, they were horribly astonished at seeing the room filled with company, over whom the object of their bitter calumnies were presiding like a host, with both power and wish

to make his guests happy around him. Prominent amongst these were Tommy Hart and his merry helpmate ; Cuthbert Dredger and his son ; Jasper Broadfoot ; Peg o' the Twicken Bottle, and her old acquaintance with the triple chin ; Quiney and his affectionate partner ; Susanna and Jonas Tietape.

After a stare of intolerable astonishment at the company, the three worthies stared as fixedly at each other. The company looked as though they enjoyed their confusion ; one or two wore a grave aspect, a few seemed inclined for sport ; and, when the old Jezabels looked at young Quiney, or Tommy Hart, or Jonas Tietape, they found faces so disguised by the extravagant grimaces with which each strove to rival the other, that they knew not what strange animals they had got amongst.

"O' the dickens !" exclaimed Aunt Prate-apace, who was not easily abashed. "Who would have thought of meeting here so pleasant a company ? There is Tom Quiney, as I live !" At this recognition, the aforesaid Tom put his visage into a horrible squint. "How fare you, Tommy Hart ?" continued she, whereupon little Tommy set up a squint more horrible still. "And my merry gossip, Jonas Tietape ! how goes all with you ?" Jonas answered only with so unnatural a contortion of eyes, nose, and mouth, that such as had with great difficulty kept a serious aspect could restrain themselves no longer, and there was a general laugh.

"Let us off to the church-ale at Wilmetote," said Aunt Gadabout ; "I warrant we, shall be more welcome there than here."

"Go hang thyself for an old fool !" exclaimed Aunt Breedbate, evidently bursting with rage and spite. "What care I for their welcome ! Anne hath not the spirit of a woman, that's plain." Here young Quiney set up a caterwauling. "But if she fancyeth being trampled on, I doubt not she'll have enough of it, poor wretch !" At this Tommy Hart addeth an exquisite attempt at caterwauling in a higher key.—"She's an unthankful, false, worthless, vile, treacherous jade as ever was born ; her fine husband will find that out, I can tell him. God give her grace to mend her ways, say I ! for the villainy I have known of her—" She was interrupted by such a terrible burst of cat music from Jonas Tietape, as though a fight of tabbies had broken out more general than had ever been known.—Thereupon young Quiney and Tommy Hart joined in full chorus, which made so intolerable a din, Talbot, who had hitherto re-

garded the whole scene in silent wonder, rose up and commenced howling with all his might, and some of the company were glad to put their hands to their ears, the rest having enough to do holding their sides.

The three worthies waited not for any thing else. They bounced out of the house like very furies ; but, ere they had well got into the road, commenced so fierce a quarrel amongst themselves, as to who was to blame for this misbehaving of their kinswoman, that for the first time since they had been together, they would have none of each other's company. It may be here added, that soon after this they found themselves so ill received wherever they went, that they thought it best to leave Shottery. Each proceeded in a different direction, and for the rest of their lives never again entered into that neighborhood.

Perchance the reader will not object in this instance to diverge a little from the current of the narrative, to follow the fortunes of one of his especial acquaintances, the young physician. It has been shown how he went to the French king's city of Paris, to be physician to the ambassador.—When Sir George Carew returned home, Dr. John Hall was recommended to a great nobleman of France, with whom he travelled into the Low countries. He ultimately left Flanders for England. On his landing he made directly for London, where, as he approached, he was sensible of some unpleasant feelings. What further annoyances might be in store for him he had yet to learn, but the subject was one he could not think of without many discordant associations. It chanced, as he entered London by the Oxford road early in the morning, he descried a great assemblage of persons pushing towards him with a horrid yelling and screaming :—"Prythee, good friend," said he, to one of a group who were passing close to him, "what meaneth this comotion ?"

"Know you not, valiant sir" replied the other, seemingly in some astonishment, "that this is the morning of the execution ?"

"A morning which all London have been thinking of this last fortnight or more," added a middle-aged, flauntingly-dressed female beside him. Dr. Hall recognised the voice. It was that of Tabitha Thatchpole, of Golden Lane. He, however, stood in no fear of being recognised, as in the last few years he had greatly altered. He briefly mentioned that he had been but scarcely a day

in England. This made the other communicative.

He stated that, in the midst of the approaching crowd, two of the horriblest criminals ever heard of were being conducted to Tyburn.

"I would not have believed it," said Mistress Thatchpole, "had it not been so clearly proved against them. They were among my most familiar gossips. Alack, who would have thought, after such pleasant hours passed with them, that I should go so far to see them hanged! In sooth, 'tis a strange world, excellent sir. This noble soldier, Captain Swashbuckler, is my husband."

"A master of fence to the Czar of Muscovy, and to the Emperor of China, at your service, valiant sir," whispered the cast captain.

"And we have known these villainous wretches as familiarly as we have known each other," added the female. "But it was clean impossible any one could have dreamt of the villainy they practised. As for Mistress Millicent—"

"Millicent who?" demanded the young physician earnestly.

"Why the intolerable base wretch, who, with her horribly infamous father, Doctor Posset, as he was styled, are now about to suffer the punishment due to such abominable wickedness as they have been guilty of during a long course of secret poisonings, by which it has been proved they got great gains."

On hearing this, Doctor Hall strove to put his horse in another direction, but he was encompassed by the crowd, and he was obliged to wait till it had passed. The intelligence he had heard was but too true.—An enquiry into the mysterious death of a nobleman excited suspicion, a connexion having been proved between the widow and the physician's daughter. Sufficient came out in the examination to warrant the committal to prison of both father and daughter. Evidences of their guilt were discovered in the little buck chamber in the house in Golden Lane, which contained, in a secret press, a collection of the most subtle poisons, with every apparatus for weighing, measuring, and mixing; and it was proved in the trial that, under cover of being a physician, the self-styled doctor had for many years securely carried on the trade of a secret poisoner, in which his daughter had actively assisted, among others having been employed for that purpose by the infamous Countess of Rochester.

It was in vain Dr. Hall strove to keep

his horse out of the press; the yelling and shouting so increased, the animal became almost unmanageable; and, in a state of horror not to be conceived, he found himself so close to the sledge on which the criminals were being dragged to the gallows, that he could distinguish their haggard, ghastly features. He closed his eyes—a sense of suffocation seemed to overwhelm him, and he knew not how he got out of the crowd, or completed his journey to his inn in Smithfield, for afterwards all seemed a blank.

It may here be added, that these villainous wretches were hanged at Tyburn, according to their sentence, after having confessed to a series of murders, by secret poisoning, that made the very blood run cold to bear. Such was the detestation felt by the citizens for their hellish practices, that the house in which they dwelt was presently razed to the ground; and, for many years afterwards, many an awful tale was told of the dark practices of the secret poisoners of Barbican. The rest of the family disappeared, and were never more heard of.

It was not until he found himself in the genial society of his fast friend, Master Shakspeare, a welcome visiter at New Place, that Doctor Hall could get out of his mind the terrible end of the base wretch whose villainous arts had cast such a blight upon his youth. There, however, he speedily regained his wonted composure. Cheerful society, continued intercourse with minds of a pure and lofty character, could not fail to elevate his own. He soon found himself taking a deep interest in matters that entirely led him away from the past; and, as this grew more engrossing, the influence of the latter entirely disappeared. But the restoration of his mind to its native tranquillity he owed rather to the daughter than to the father. Ever since their mutual attendance at the sick bed of the honored inmate of the dwelling in the Clink Liberty, they had entertained a most favorable opinion of each other from the amiable qualities they exhibited.

Many a miserable hour had been brightened by the recollection of the gentle, self-denying creature, with whom the young physician had shared so many anxious vigils at the bedside of Master Shakspeare: and it may also be said that, in the brilliant scenes in which she afterwards moved, Susanna did not forget the grave, pure-minded youth, whose devotion to her parent had so entirely won her esteem. On their meeting under happier auspices, these favorable estimates of each were much strengthened.

They now possessed ample opportunities of studying each other's disposition, and every day they gave to the task increased their admiration.

They were necessarily thrown much into each other's society under circumstances which allowed the cultivation of the most agreeable impressions. Master Shakspeare was ever intent on setting afoot some pleasant pastime in which all those around him might join. One day, a party went a-birding to Tiddington,—another a-hunting in Drayton Bushes, a third a-fishing by the meadows near Welford, a fourth they would proceed to fly their hawks along the river by Ludington; then they would take rambles, perchance, to Hampton Lucy, or Lower Clopton, or Barden Hill, a summer-day's stroll in the woods, or a moonlit walk on the banks of the Avon. In all such cases, Master Doctor Hall and Mistress Susanna Shakspeare frequently found themselves together, taking exceeding delight in each other's observations. Although since his appearance she was observed to be a shade less grave than she had been for some months, she was far from being the same careless-hearted being she had seemed during her appearance at the court of France.

The young physician seemed to possess unusual buoyancy. The vast stores of learning he had accumulated he gave out with liberal hand, and took his share in the conversation with the many noble spirits continually appearing at Master Shakspeare's hospitable board, in a way that shewed he was not unworthy of such fellowship.

Their mutual liking had been of long standing, but it appeared as though warmer feelings were now exercising their influence. This was not so plainly visible in their conversation as in their general bearing towards each other. There was a constant attention paid by the one to the other's feelings and sentiments. Nei her expressed the emotions the other had inspired, but a thousand graceful attentions gave evidence of their existence. They were, however, becoming much too strong to remain longer undeclared.

It chanced that, in one of their customary moonlit rambles, which had been prolonged somewhat beyond the usual time, they conversed in that low, earnest tone used only where the speaker speaketh to the heart rather than to the ear. The subject, either by accident or design, was the possibility of the existence of a second attachment, after the first had ended in horrible disappointment. The young physician, with

deep earnestness, and a tremor in his voice that bespoke the powerful interest he felt in his subject, was expressing his arguments in favor of the mind and heart recovering themselves even after the terriblest shock.

Susanna listened with unusual attention. Her eyes were directed to the ground, and her complexion seemed a shade paler than ordinary. There was a balmy freshness in the air, peculiarly welcome after a sultry day; and the stars shone in the clear heavens with a brightness that seemed truly magical. The mill and the mill-stream looked bathed in an atmosphere of liquid silver, that gleamed over the river, and on the neighboring barn, the trees, and the town and church spreading out in the near distance. In brief, it was a landscape which lacked nothing but a pair of lovers to appear a very paradise upon earth. It can hardly be said that there was any thing of such a sort wanted here. If the two who walked so quietly through this unfrequented path were not lovers, they were in a state as near to loving as it was possible for them to be in.

"Methinks," continued he, "nature would be losing sight of justice, were the heart, that hath already been once strongly acted upon to no end but its own deep unhappiness, never to know the genuine taste of that extreme bliss of the which it hath been wilfully cheated. That it doth so happen cannot be denied,—for, in some, the shock which misused affection endureth is of that terrible sort that it bringeth all to one confused ruin; but as, in the physical world, we see after the fiercest tempests the landscape look more lovely than ever, so in the moral world, these rude tornadoes may spend their fury, yet in time there shall arise sensations, hopes, and wishes, of that goodlier sort no appreciation can fully appraise. The clouds have passed off; the atmosphere hath become clear: the mind rebounds from the severe pressure that hath fallen on it to an elevation far above its ordinary level; and the sense of enjoyment becomes the more active, it being, as it were, a rebound from the sense of misery which preceded it."

Susanna still listened with downcast eyes.

"If any one look carefully to the laws which govern the great sphere we inhabit, there will be found to be a carefully adjusted system of compensation. No injury is done for which a recompence is not offered. No loss is sustained which is not followed by a gain. The leaves that the autumnal blast tears from the boughs, form, during

winter, a source of nourishment and warmth to the roots. The fire that destroyed an impassable tangled thicket, where there grows nothing wholesome, creates a soil that will speedily produce the richest verdure. Wherever there is evil, be sure there is some good at hand to neutralise it. It is not enough to know, that the bee that stingeth you can sting you no more ; the true satisfaction lieth in learning he possesses a honey-bag, that is at once the best remedy for the wound, and the exquisitest gratification to the taste. When you are tossed in a storm that mingleth sea and sky together, you may draw comfort from the conviction that the same mighty force which plungeth your ship into the trough of the sea, sends her careering over the next mountainous billow, a good step towards a secure port."

The speaker paused, but he heard neither reply nor comment.

"And touching our inward natures," said he. "It standeth to reason that the same beneficence should equally preside there. Surely there is a fund to draw upon in case of reverses : and that he who is a bankrupt in heart shall find means to begin the world again with fairer hopes than ever. Perchance I shall be better understood, if I put the case in this sort." At this part his voice began to falter somewhat. "I will say that I have loved—loved wholly and most passionately ; but have been made the victim of the most consummate craft and treachery. My affections have suffered shipwreck, but Time, the consoler, hath at last enabled me to put to sea again, far away from any such breakers as have done me such ill service. Suppose it should chance to be my good fortune to meet with a person so admirably disposed as yourself, and, under the influence of your numberless sweet virtues, I should surrender up my faith, my hope, my pleasures, unto your honorable custody. Let it not be conceived that, having been robbed of my happiness, I am so thorough a pauper in that commodity, I am in the state of him who seeketh a provision out of the abundance of another, on the claim of destitution. So far from the sweet well of human comfort being exhausted in me, it is only in that state which requires a touch of genuine sympathy to bring it out in more freshness and abundance, than followed the smiting of the rock by the great law-giver of ancient time. Well then, excellent Susanna ; in this case I present myself before you—I look to you for the happiness I should have found elsewhere. I require of you to answer whether, knowing

my misadventure, you can assure yourself of the same perfectness of contentation, you might have looked for from one who hath had no experience in such matters."

These words were not expressed without some hesitation on the part of the speaker, and on the part of the listener, with very evident embarrassment. At the conclusion of his speech, there remained a pause for some few minutes : the silence was at last broken, but, as it seemed, with no small difficulty.

"The case you have put," answered she, "of a surety, is well worthy of attention, and demandeth some consideration in the answering. Before I attempt this, I have much to say, that must be said. I do not feel equal to enter into such a matter at this moment. Permit me some sufficient time to think of it. To-morrow, if it please you, we will resume our walk in this direction, when I will unburthen my heart of a misery which I thought to have left there undisturbed for the rest of my days. Till then, bear with me, I pray you."

The walk was concluded in silence, but this silence was more eloquent to the hearts of both, than could have been an age of ordinary talking. Soon afterwards they separated. Dr. Hall pressed an uneasy pillow that night. There was something in the parting words of Mistress Susanna, that seemed pregnant with unpleasant mystery, and he thought it boded him and his hopes of happiness no good. She had impressed on him so firm a conviction of her being essential to his felicity, if ever that was to be attained by him, that any thing that tended to disturb it filled him with intolerable uneasiness.

He waited all the next day with a sort of creeping dread upon him, and thought time never hung so heavy as in the hour that interposed between their meeting. He saw her not all that day. As the time drew near, his uneasiness increased. He imagined all sorts of unaccountable strange things that were to affect his hopes. Doubts and misgivings followed each other in apparently endless succession. The hour at last arrived for the customary evening walk, but to his exceeding astonishment, instead of mistress Susanna, came a letter from her. He opened it with infinite quietude, and read as follows :

"I thought I could have schooled myself into the doing of a task, which your late advertisement to me hath rendered too absolute to be avoided ; and finding I am quite unable to the due performance of it, I must throw myself on your indulgence, whilst,

with whatever humble craft of pen I possess, I proceed to it by an easier method. Know then, sweet sir, that like yourself I have loved with all mine heart, one whom I believed the devotion of a thousand hearts, had I possessed them, were no more than his due. In station he was so far above me, that I felt it to be an honor to have his notice—a happiness unspeakable to obtain his affection. For some time he lived under the same threshold with myself, and, besides swearing himself my true servant, seemed never to be easy unless testifying to me how much above all other women in the world he held me in his esteem. In sooth these fine speeches gave me such exquisite contentation, that nothing on earth could come nigh it. If ever woman loved in all honesty of heart, and believed she was loved with a like entireness, I was that happy creature. Of course I thought him of such nobleness of mind as only angels are kindred of; I could not for an instant imagine that one who looked so well and spoke so well, had any sort of ill-disposedness whatever.

"One night we had sat up late together, and were alone, as we had been many times before; but of this terrible night, spare me, I implore you, any further history, than that only by a chance so fortunate as to declare itself a Providence protecting a helpless and almost fallen creature, I escaped from a villany as deeply laid as it was basely put in practice. I held my peace, for I saw full well my speaking might do much mischief, but could do no good. Of him it is only necessary to say that he had the grace to seem repentant; yet the outrage was too gross to be so readily overlooked as he expected. I bade him avoid me—I would have none of him from that time forth. My heart ached for it for many a weary day and sleepless night, but I felt it was due to myself to show such a person I possessed that sense of self-respect which is the true armor of proof to innocence and purity.

"I will not deny that you, sweet sir, have medicined most welcomely to the devouring misery, which, for no inconsiderable time, looked to have marked me for its prey. The influence of your worthiness has fallen on my path like a sunshine, and the shadow that seemed impenetrable is now dispersing rapidly away. I deeply regret that the heart you have done me the honor to desire is too battered and bruised to be worthy of your possessing; but, if you be in the same mood after the perusal of what is here writ down, be assured that, as far as your happiness can be secured by so poor a source

of enjoyment, there shall be nothing wanting to hold it as securely as ever happiness was held in this world. And so fare you well, sweet sir, till we meet on the morrow!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

Ease and wine

Have bred these bold tales: Poets when they
rage,

Turn gods to men, and make an hour an age;
But I will give a greater state and glory,
And raise to time a noble memory.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

In the long winter evenings, it became the custom at New Place to cheer away the hours with all manner of pleasant sports, Master Shakspeare being ever ready to set an example of such pleasantry, and a jovial time it was sure to be when he set the game afoot. Barley-break, hunt-the-slipper, blind-man's-buff, hot-cockles, and I know not what exquisite pastimes, were going on in the hall; and of the merry company who enjoyed themselves equally with the host, be sure there was Sir George Carew, our young physician, Susanna and Judith, Tommy Hart, Jonas Tietape, and Dick Quiney; and the prodigal heaps of mirth with which they garnished this pleasantry, no pen can sufficiently express. When they had tired themselves of these several honest sports, they would each to his stool or a corner of the settle, and sit round the hearth, bantering, and jesting, and relating such things worth the telling as had come within their several observations. But the chief enjoyment to the greater number was the telling of stories, as hath been said, which, when they got in the humor, all were obliged to do in turn, and the listening to such was found to be as exquisite pleasure as ever was known. Now, there was some marvellous thrilling narrative from the host which sent them to their beds brimming with wonder, pleasure, and admiration; anon came a strange eventful adventure among the wild Irish, or some glance into court life by Sir George Carew. Next followed some touching tale of love by Judith or Susanna; Jonas Tietape, Dick Quiney, and Tommy Hart, would be content only with tales of mirth; and such mirth was put forth in them as would have stirred a bed-ridden weaver out of his melancholy. Joan, too, could not but choose to be in as merry a key as her husband; and our young physician threw variety into the series by nar-

rating scenes of sorrow and suffering he had had notice of whilst practising the art of healing in England and France.

Of the stories that formed the entertainment of this merry circle, it so chances that the reader cannot, at this present, have a choicer sample of them than can be found in the one here given, which was one night related by the fire-side by no less a person than Sir George Carew, and called by him

THE COURT FOOL.

In a goodly chamber, well hung with costly arras that was in the palace of Hatfield, there sat a lady of a very commendable aspect, though it wore an expression somewhat serious withal. She was young—that is to say, nigh unto five-and-twenty years of age, and looked to be of a fair stature. Her hair, of a light red tint, whereof the greater portion was concealed under a small caul of gold thread, was combed up from the forehead, showing a right delicate complexion, and a brow of a famous thoughtfulness. Her dress was a close-vested robe of a sober color, and without ornament, that had nothing noticeable about it, save its extreme simplicity; indeed, in her whole attire, seemly though it was, there was evidence of a wonderful modesty in the wearer, and a marvellous freedom from that common vanity of the sex that delighteth in the wearing of gandy apparel. She sat in a cushioned arm-chair of carved oak, close upon the hearth, seemingly as if gazing upon the log that was burning on the fire-dogs—for it was the 17th November—holding in her lap what looked to be a missal, or other work of the like kind, used by Catholics in their devotions; and she wore a rosary round her neck, to the which there was affixed an ivory cross. This was no other than the Lady Elizabeth, at that time residing in a sort of honorable durance at the royal palace of Hatfield, by command of her sister, Queen Mary, who, out of fear that the Protestants of the kingdom would, in consequence of her highness's persecution of them, rise in rebellion, and drive her from the throne, to place the Lady Elizabeth thereon, did treat her with a monstrous lack of sisterly affection, kept her a prisoner, and sought always to make her disavow any participation in the principles of the Reformed faith; of which the end was, that the poor lady did lead a most unhappy life.

Doubtless was she reflecting upon her distressed condition at that time, and imagining of some means whereby she might escape the snares with which her enemies did encompass her all around. Presently

she pulled from her bodice a letter, which, first taking of a hasty glance around the room to see that she was watched of none, she opened, and quickly began to read. It was to this effect:—

“Count me not a laggard, or one unmindful of your interests, I pray you; for, though I have not writ to you so long a time, it hath been entirely because of my poor wit not being able to discover such conveyance as would warrant me risking a letter. Me-thinks now I have hit upon such a plan as must be the very safest of all under the circumstances of the case. The bearer hereof is trustworthy, and is not like to be suspected. You may say to him what your necessities require of you, the which he will, with a proper cunning, and with all convenient speed, transmitt to me; and at the next favorable opportunity count upon having my answer at his hands.”

At the perusal of this passage, the Lady Elizabeth broke off, and looked to be considering of the matter for a minute or so; anon she read on:—

“To my certain knowledge, you will be placed in great jeopardy, mind you not how you carry yourself. My lord cardinal appeareth to be sick of the slaughter that hath been going on among the suffering Protestants of this now unhappy country; but Bonner only getteth to be more sanguinary, the more Christian blood he is allowed to shed. Her highness, as I think, affects the counsels of this recreant bishop, more than she does those of Pole; and I ofttimes tremble for your safety, for the loss of Calais hath made her temper most inhuman and bearish. Doubtless they will strive for the making a convert of you. Regard not their efforts with too great an indifference; rather seek to make them believe that you are ready to be convinced should they afford you proper argument for it. In this way shall you gain time, which is of vital moment, and keep them from all excuse of violent measures. Remember how many look to you for the rescuing of unhappy England from the Philistines, by whom she is oppressed, and be not regardless of a life so dear to so vast a multitude.

“From your humble, poor servant
“At commandment,

“W. C.”

The lady Elizabeth, after carefully reading of this epistle some two or three times, with a countenance which showed she was pondering on its contents, stood up and dropped it into the fire; then, after watching it till it burned out, and, re-seating of herself, she appeared to be intent upon perusing the

little book she had a while since held in her lap.

"I prythee hold thy prate!" exclaimed a gentleman of a pleasant cheerful countenance, and somewhat worshipful presence, as he entered at the door. He was closely followed by as merry looking an object as eye could desire to gaze on. He wore a parti-colored coat, fastened round the body with a girdle, having a hood to it, partly covering the head, and surmounted with ass's ears; below his coat he had on close breeches, with hose of different colors on each leg; and in his hand he carried a short stick, with an inflated bladder at one end, and a carving like unto a fool's head at the other. He came into the room, whirling of his stick, making strange grimaces and ridiculous antics behind the person he followed.

"I prythee hold thy prate," repeated the gentleman, but not as if in any way out of humor.

"That will I, master," replied the other, with a famous grave countenance; "be you so civil as to show me at which end I be to hold it;" and then he suddenly brake out into singing:—

"My leman and I fell out, perdie!
With my hey nonnie, nonnie, O!
For love will not last every day,
And the summer grass soon turns to hay,
With my hey nonnie—"

"Hast no better singing than that in a lady's hearing?" exclaimed his master, turning round upon him rather sharply.

"Ay, marry have I—brave singing, I warrant you, if it please her ladyship to be in a brave humor," answered he; "I have songs of every color in the rainbow, for all the several sorts of fancies; and some that be parti-colored, for such as God hath blessed with an infinite proper disposition after motley."

"How canst talk of the colors of songs, fool?" asked the gentleman. "That must needs be out of all reasonable conceit, seeing that songs are made up of sounds that cannot be judged by the eye. "Please you, my lady," added he, as he advanced courteously to the Lady Elizabeth, who, undisturbed by the entrance of her visitors, seemed still to be perusing of the book she held in her hand, "seeing that your ladyship hath grown exceedingly melancholy of late, I have taken into my service this varlet, at a friend's recommendation, hoping he may afford you such entertainment as may render your way of life somewhat the more agreeable to you, than I am fearful it hath been for this several weeks past."

"Truly, Sir Thomas Pope, I am much beholden to you," answered the lady, graciously. "It is long since my poor condition hath seemed to be regarded of any in this land; yet happy am I that, with an untroubled conscience, I can resign myself to what may come of it. Certes, methinks there must be no offence so great as that of being innocent of all; nevertheless, it is not in my nature to be altogether indififerent to the many great kindnesses I have received at your hands, the which, weary of my life as I am, I do hope, with God's good help, I may live to requite."

"Well, Heaven hath been wonderfully bountiful to me, that be a sure thing!" cried the fool, with a monstrous urgency, as he looked to be examining of some books upon a table in the middle of the chamber.

"How now, fool?" exclaimed Sir Thomas.

"A grace of God, lady!" added the other, in the same tone and manner, as he brought a volume in his hand for her to look at. "I pray you say of what this book may be about, and in what tongue it be writ?"

"It containeth divers seelot orations of Isocrates," replied she, "written in very choice Greek."

"And this?" asked he, taking up another book.

"That is Sophocles his tragedies, writ in the same tongue."

"And this, and this?" continued he, showing a new volume, when the last one had been named.

"The one is no other than the Holy Evangelists; the other those masterpieces of eloquence, the orations of Demosthenes; both also writ in Greek, and very delectable reading for all scholar-like and Christian people."

"And, I pray you, tell me what may be these others?" inquired the fool, pointing to many more that were upon the table.

"The one nighest unto you is a volume of Titus Livius his histories, in excellent good Latin," answered the Lady Elizabeth, as courteously as if she was holding converse with some ripe scholar or person of worship, instead of being so close questioned of an ignorant poor fool, who possessed not so much learning as would master a horn-book. "That beside it is the very moving and truly admirable story of Amadis de Gaul, writ in French; and the two that lie further off are the pleasant tales of Boccaccio and Bandello, writ in the Italian tongue; beside which there are sundry right estimable volumes treating of religion, philosophy, and such other grave

matters it be necessary for the wise and good to know of; and these be writ in the same several languages, as well as some that be in English."

Doubtless, to know all these strange tongues requireth a wonderful deal of pains-taking and patience?" asked the other.

"They cannot be well learned without, nor can any be accounted truly wise that knoweth them not," replied the lady.

"Then they that be fools have much to be thankful for!" exclaimed he, very heartily.

"How so, knave?" exclaimed his master. "What have fools to be thankful for, more than wiser folk? that be clean contrary to common sense."

"Nay, by your leave, master, I will prove it beyond all denying," replied the other, with an exquisite, solemn, foolish face."

"Do so, then, and quickly, or I will have thee whipped over thy fool's pate with thine own bauble!" added Sir Thomas.

"Now, it be on the face of it, no man can be wise without he endure a monstrous deal of trouble to make himself so."

"Well, varlet?" exclaimed his master.

"Now, this trouble, I take it, is a thing that they be best off who know least of: in honest truth, it seemeth to be a very pestilent sort of thing, and to be eschewed of all men."

"What then, knave?"

"This much, master. Methinks it be no way difficult to prove that a man may become a fool, and know not a jot of trouble in the becoming."

"I doubt it not," said the other, smiling at the varlet's exceeding gravity.

"It cometh naturally, as peascods come upon their stalks, or as a calf seeketh its dam—by a sort of instinct as it were, or disposition which a man hath to be a fool. Therefore, not being put to the infinite trouble which waiteth upon they that seek to be wise, they that be fools have much to be thankful for!"

"Truly, a fool's argument!" cried Sir Thomas, laughingly. "Dost not think, my lady, that the knave hath some shrewdness?" asked he, turning to the lady Elizabeth.

"Methinks, for a fool, he is well enough," answered the lady, carelessly, as if she took not much interest in the matter. At this the fool began to sing, with great earnestness—

"Hush thee poor babe!—cold blows the wind,
Thick falls the rain upon the tree;
But more regardless—more unkind,
Hath been thy father's heart to me!"

"If thou canst not sing better matter than that, and be hanged to thee, thou hadst best come to a quick halt in thy singing," exclaimed his master. "Be such miserable cot-quane ballads as that the properest sort of minstrelsy for a lady's bower—to say nought of its unfitness for one of a melancholy humor?"

"In good fay, master, I knew not the lady was so disposed," replied the other. Then, turning to the Lady Elizabeth, added, "Art melancholy for lack of a husband, an it please you, my lady?"

"By my troth, no, indeed!" answered she, smiling.

"Such things have been, and much mischief come of it," continued the fool, with extreme solemnness. "Now, there be two kinds of husbands—to wit, your fool husband, and your wise-man husband; of the which your fool husband is ever in wonderful estimation of all women."

"He must needs be a fool who would be seeking me on such an errand as marriage," observed the Lady Elizabeth, with a smile.

"But how shall we distinguish your fool from your wise man?" asked his master, evidently in a most cheerful humor.

"Hearken to their wives?" answered the other, knowingly. "If you hear a wife call her husband 'a brute,' be sure she hath some particular reason for't, there be no gainsaying. He is one of your wise men, out of all doubt, who are ever at their wives' kirtles; whilst 'the dear good man,' who is so cuddled and praised of his loving partner, is, beyond all contradiction, some estimable famous fool or another, who heedeth no more his helpmate's goings-on than he does which side of a Shrovetide pancake getteth first into his mouth."

"O' my life! Sir Thomas, methinks your fool speaketh but uncivilly of us poor women," exclaimed the lady, yet not in any way ungraciously.

"Nay, he meaneth no harm, be assured," replied his master. Here the fool, looking pathetically on the head carved on his bauble, burst out a-singing—

"Oh, turn away those orbs of light,
Else, as the sun, where fires are blazing,
Their brighter splendor dim my sight,
And I grow blind by rashly gazing."

"I faith, that would be a pitiful mishap, indeed!" cried the knight, with a merry chuckle; "but I like not the humor of thy singing—it soundeth as melancholy as a hoarse cuckoo: peradventure, thou wilt now explain thy conceit of having songs of all colors, affirmed by thee as we entered my lady's chamber. Thou hast some exquisite

ridiculous reason for it, I'll be bound."

" Dear heart ! I have reason enough, and to spare, for any honest man," replied the fool ; " and yet, master, I make no boast of it. Forsooth, there be some who think 'tis a marvellous distinction now-a-days to be a fool ; but he who ventures to say I am prouder of it than I ought to be, is a thorough slanderer, and a shallow poor knave, who deserveth no better hap than to have his brains beat out with a fool's bladder ! "

" Well, knave ; but to the matter ?" exclaimed Sir Thomas.

" And was my mother of a very excellent, fine virtue ?" continued the other, with increasing earnestness. " Ay, that was she —and every one had a wonderful appreciation of her exceeding virtuousness. Indeed, it be well known she was sought after by so many husbands, she never had time to marry one of 'em.

" That sheweth the respect her virtue was held in, of a surety," observed the knight merrily. " But to thy conceit of the colors ?"

" Ay, master, and hugely to her credit ; she brought up a large family—and one of 'em is a fool," added he, assuming of some dignity. " Nay, it hath been said by divers persons of worship, that you shall find him to be as pretty a fool as any that live ; but he hath not the presumption to think himself a greater fool than his betters."

" To thy reason of the songs, and be hanged to thee !" cried Sir Thomas, catching up the bauble, and hitting the fool two or three sharp thumps over the pate with the bladder, and yet as if he was in a humor of laughing all the time ; whilst the Lady Elizabeth, as was evident, could not forbear smiling.

" Nay, master," exclaimed the fool, ducking his head here and there to avoid the blows, " if you kill me, I doubt you will have it a bit the quicker. I will about it o' the instant, please you to stay your thumping !"

" O' my word, I will send thee to the grooms to be well cudgelled of them, hear I any more of such prating," said his master, desisting from his exertions.

" I pray you do not," cried the other, with much seriousness. " Believe me, cudgelling hath not agreed with me at any time. I never took it kindly. But concerning of the songs I will speak."

" Thou hadst best," observed the knight.

" There be songs of divers colors, out of all doubt," continued the fool. " In the first place, there is your sad-colored song, which be no other than a ballad that wear-

eth a perpetual suit of mourning. It always cometh close upon the heels of a tragedy, or other doleful occasion, and is as apt at a funeral as an undertaker. Now those that do most affect your sad-colored song are, perchance, a maid who hath lost her lover, or any other small matter there be no likelihood of her recovering—a thief that hath his neck being fitted with a rope's-end—and a debtor that findeth himself within four stone walls, and no chance of getting out. And thus sing they." Thereupon, in an infinite melancholy voice, and with a very pathetic countenance, he sung these lines :

" Oh, woe is me ! oh, doleful strait !
Now mine is sorrow's piercing thorn ;
Oh, luckless hour !—oh, cruel fate !
Alack that ever I was born !"

" In honest truth, there can be no doubting of what color such a song should be," observed Sir Thomas.

" But my troth, it be a very sad color, indeed," added the Lady Elizabeth, in a like humor.

" An it please you, my lady, so it is," said the fool. " Now your flame-colored song is of a clean contrary sort. It be full of heat. It burns, as it were. In fact, its complexion be much the same as though it were taken out of the fire, red-hot ; and I doubt not, were it well hammered on a blacksmith's anvil, there would be sparks fly from it presently. The matter of this song be ever of love ; therefore, it s no marvel that it is in wonderful great request of all your young, your middle-aged ; ay, and your old oft affect it in no small measure—after such a fashion as this." Then, putting his hand to his heart, he, with a look of famous affectionateness, commenced the singing of these words :

" As burning coal,
I find my soul
Doth glow with Love's divine desires :
But in the blaze
Thine image plays,
A phoenix rising from its fires !"

" Methinks the singing of such a song should save coal and candle all the winter," remarked the knight.

" I faith, the flame of it seemeth so apparent, I marvel it burn not the house over our heads !" cried the lady, with a manner as though quite forgetting of her melancholy.

" Certes, if the timbers be dry enough, lady, such should be the case," observed the fool, very seriously. " Of other songs,

that shall easily be known by their colors, there is your watchet-colored song, which cometh also of a lover's fantasy. In it you may expect to find all the flowers of speech culled to form a posy of compliments. Then cometh your yellow song, which hath ever a very jaundiced look with it, and is in huge request with your outrageous, combative jealous pates, and throngh-going cuckold knaves. After this, there is your green song, which shall be known by its conceit of vegetation, as—

“O, the green willow!
I'll have for my pillow;”

or, with a like wofulness—

“The green, green grass shall form my bed,
Alack and well-a-day, O!
And the cold, cold stone shall hold my head,
Whilst worms on me shall prey, O!”

These be such pitiful ballads as are chosen of those who oftentimes take to an ugly fashion of tying their garters higher than need be; or, like new-hatched ducklings, rush to the highest pond as their properst place. Then, look to encounter your orange-tawny song, an exceeding brave-hearted ditty—free as air—with an amorous countenance, well embrowned with tropical sunshine. Close upon which cometh your nut-brown song, which is sure to smack of a tinker, and is like to be in more estimation of a tapster, than the whole Book of Psalms. They do say it giveth more provocation to drink than a pickled herring: therefore, will I not essay the singing of it, an it please you, master, else shall it chance to make me dry, and a dry fool cannot help being as sorry a commodity as heart could desire.”

“Gad a mercy, fellow, thou sayest true!” exclaimed Sir Thomas, evidently amused, as seemed the Lady Elizabeth also, with the famous droll seriousness with which the fool spoke the last sentence, as he appeared intent upon the examination of his fingers. “But here is a groat for thee, and, if that will not stay thy drought, get thee to the buttery, and say I sent thee for a drink of good ale.”

As the fool was making his acknowledgments for his largess, which he did in very prodigal fashion, there entered a groom of the chambers, announcing the arrival of some person who would have instant speech with Sir Thomas Pope on a matter of extreme urgency, whereupon Sir Thomas bade the fool stay where he was awhile, and, with a courteous speech to the lady, hoping the varlet might afford her some entertainment, he presently took his leave.

No sooner was he out of the chamber, and the fool left alone with the lady, than the former, on a sudden dropping of his appearance of foolishness, seemed listening to the retreating footsteps with a countenance of intense interest; then went he and opened the door and looked out, and after that kept spying about the arras hangings very curiously, the lady all the while regarding him with a wonderful earnestness. In a few minutes he approached his companion, in a manner marvelous respectful, and, going close up, said, in a low voice, “I pray you, my lady, tell me, have you read Sir William Cecil's letter?—the which, though it hath been in my hands ten days, could I find no opportunity for its safe deliverance till noonday yesterday, when, as Sir Thomas was in close converse with the priest in the park, I slipped it in the posy of dandelions and daisies, and such poor weeds I was then gathering, and gave unto you.”

“In truth, yes,” said the lady, still regarding him closely, and speaking in an under-tone; “I have read it, but I marvel greatly Sir William Cecil should show such an infinite lack of discretion as to make choice of such a messenger. That business must needs come to a foolish ending that hath a fool to meddle with it.”

“I beseech you, my lady, take me not for what I have appeared,” replied the other, earnestly. “This is nothing but a device put on for the better carrying on of our purposes, and watching over your safety. Think not that my worthy and approved friend, Sir William, would have set me on such service, had he not first looked narrowly into my fitness. I hope to prove myself your assured good servant and poor bondsman; hinder you not my service. It is an excellent fine plot, my lady; and I doubt not to carry it on with such singular cunning, that you shall reap by it much benefit, and with God's good help be rescued from your present troubles.”

“I would your hope could be accomplished,” replied the Lady Elizabeth; “but, I pray you, tell me to whom I am indebted for such ready zeal in my behalf.”

“My name is Thomas Challoner,” answered he; “a poor gentleman of some small credit with his fellows, and not altogether deficient of that experience—at least so it hath been thought—necessary to one who is ambitious of devoting his life in the cause of the very fairest and most excellent princess in Christendom.”

“I heartily thank you, Master Challoner,” said his companion, very graciously; “I would it were in my power to recompense

you as your great pains-taking, and ready-thrusting yourself into danger for my sake, merit; but, assure yourself, I will ever hold in my heart a grateful remembrance of your infinite goodness towards me, and that I live in the extreme hope of one day or other making you such poor amends as my ability may allow."

"Talk not of it, I pray you, my lady," exclaimed Master Challoner, respectfully. "Believe me, the honor I find in what I have undertaken exceedeth all that the proudest monarch could bestow; but rather, if it so please you, for the time is precious, give me some answer to the letter of Sir William Cecil."

"Tell him, then, from me, worthy sir, I have done all that he would have me do, ere his letter came into my hands," replied the Lady Elizabeth. "This same meddlesome and violent priest, Master Dr. Crosier, whom I suspect Bonner hath sent here to worry me into my grave, hath essayed all the hottest zeal and furious bigotry could do for my conversion; he hath persecuted me night and morn with the horriblest threatenings and terriblest denunciations, giving me reason to believe that her Highness is thirsting for my blood, and that noight could ensure my safety but the complete renunciation of my Protestant errors, and the declaring of myself a member of his infallible church: whereupon, weary of his persecutions, and, in truth, almost weary of my life, and, scarce knowing which way to turn in my extremity, I heard mass, and confessed to him, and in all things outwardly appeared as he would have me, though in heart, as God is my judge, I am as true a Protestant as ever lived."

Master Challoner listened to this avowal with a countenance of much anxiousness, but at its ending brightening up somewhat, he added—

"Methinks 'tis well it is no worse. I grieve from my heart that your sufferings should have been so great; but, knowing the nature of those who have greatest influence in your fate, I know they are in a manner natural, and to be expected. I beseech you, my lady, think me not over-bold if I offer to advise you in this strait, for I know better than yourself the many dangers that encompass you. From what I have lately learned from a creditable source, I believe this to be the criticallest time of all your life; and therefore I pray you, in company with all your assured friends, take good heed of what you do; appear what you like, but pledge yourself to nothing; stir not your tyrants against you, if you

can help it; but sign no papers that shall bind you to be their servitor in aftertimes; delay, and keep delaying, should they press you upon any such matters, for you shall find such policy of the very utmost consequence to your present safety and future welfare."

Whilst this conversation was proceeding, three persons had been in a secret debate in another chamber of the palace. One seemed to have rode hard and fast upon a journey, for he sat wiping of his face with a napkin, though he talked earnestly all the while; beside which, the rowels of his spurs were of a sanguine tinge, showing he had sparcd not his horse as he came; and his apparel was so covered with dirt and dust, that it was hard to tell of what color or material it might be. He was stoutly built, and his features had somewhat of a stern and unpleasant cast with them. Close upon him stood one of a spare body, tall, with a sharp, thin face, of a dark complexion, beetling eyebrows, hooked nose, and thick bushy black beard, dressed in the habit of an ecclesiastic, who seemed to be listening to the other with so severe an earnestness, it was evident that the matter they talked of was of huge importance; and occasionally he would interrupt the speaker with questions, to which the other gave answers that appeared only the more to increase the number of such inquiries. Opposite to him, leaning against a table, on which was a hat, whip, and gloves, as if carelessly thrown there, stood the more courtly figure of Sir Thomas Pope, with a countenance full of anxiety and interest, as he listened or took part in the discourse.

"Then there must be no time lost," observed the ecclesiastic, as the other came to a pause in his speech. "Hast got the papers that honorable and truly Christian prelate, my lord bishop, gave you, worthy sir?"

"Here are they, safe enough, I warrant you, master doctor," replied the other, producing some papers from his vest.

"Then come you with me, Sir Thomas; we will to her on the instant!" added he, who had been styled doctor, as he took the papers into his own hands.

"I trust you will use no violence, Dr. Crosier," said Sir Thomas Pope, as the other two seemed about to leave him. "This is an affair of great peril, nor am I sure Bishop Bonner hath proper warrant for setting you upon it."

"It is for her soul's comfort, and the good of the true church!" exclaimed the ecclesiastic, regarding Sir Thomas with some severity. "Methinks that be proper

warrant enough; and I marvel that any of our holy faith should say aught against it. I charge you, as you value your soul's welfare, see that none enter at these gates till we return to this chamber. This is God's own work we are about, and I doubt not to make it the greatest victory ever achieved over the accursed heresy that plagues this unhappy land."

At hearing this, Sir Thomas reverently bowed his head, though in his countenance it was evident he was exceeding anxious for the issue; and then Dr. Crosier and his companion, all dusty as he was, took themselves out of the chamber. As they walked along, they conversed with each other in Latin; and so intent were they on what they were saying, that they noticed not one close upon their footsteps.

"How now, fool?" cried Dr. Crosier sharply, as he all at once discovered he was followed.

"Forsooth, and may it please your reverence," said Master Challoner, in as foolish a manner as was ever seen, "I have heard it said that the ways of holy men were in the paths of righteousness, and wishing to get as nigh heaven as a fool can, I thought it good to bring my toes and your reverence's heels in as close acquaintance as possible, that I might be all the more sure of the right path."

"Be gone, fellow, or your bones shall ache for it!" exclaimed master doctor.

"Nay, O' my life, I will tread on your heels as little as may be!" added the assumed fool, very movingly.

"Get you not gone this instant, I will see you have such a cudgelling, as you shall bear in remembrance to your life's end."

At this the other began to whimper, and, rubbing his eyes with his sleeve, turned himself round, and proceeded slowly the way he came.

"Thinkest thou, he heard aught of our speech?" inquired he who was styled Sir Topas, as they continued their walk and their discourse.

"It matters not," replied Dr. Crosier; "he is a very fool, without learning of any kind."

Soon afterwards they arrived at that part of the palace where the lady Elizabeth had her lodging, and, gaining admittance to her chamber, found her seated in a recess, where the window looked out upon the park and grounds, as if seriously intent upon the perusal of the same little volume of prayers she had in hand a while since.

"Glad am I to find you so well disposed," said Dr. Crosier, after some civil greeting

betwixt him and the lady. "Doubtless your ladyship findeth excellent comfort from the contemplation of such true piety and marvellous fine wisdom as may be found in those homilies."

"Indeed, I do find in them exceeding comfort!" answered the lady Elizabeth.

"Surely, you had no such satisfaction from aught appertaining to that pestilent heresy in which you had the ill-hap to get instructed?" inquired the divine.

"Methinks, no," responded his apparent convert.

"Believe me, there can be no comparison," added Dr. Crosier; "and I doubt not, ere long, you shall receive such delight—seek you with all your heart and soul to be a good Catholic—as, before, you have had no knowledge."

"I humbly trust I may become so deserving," answered the lady.

Thus went they on for some time, he with great persuasiveness assuring her of the wonderful content she must find in the doctrines of what he styled the only church in which rested the saving of souls; and she, with a wonderful resignation, seeming to assent to everything, yet pledging herself to nought.

"Metanks, now, I cannot doubt of your conversion," said this ecclesiastic at last; "with the which I am the more pleased, as her Highness, at my report of your complete casting away the wretched schism with which you had been affeted, hath sent one of her chaplains, my estimable and very learned friend here, Sir Topas Fletcher, to see that you have truly done what I have reported."

"Truly, honorable lady," exclaimed his companion, now addressing the lady Elizabeth for the first time, "what Dr. Crosier hath stated is not a whit from the truth."

"And moreover, he hath brought from her Highness," continued master doctor, producing and opening a paper, "a written recantation of your errors, which, it is expected, you will sign without any demur or delay."

The lady Elizabeth, without expressing any objection, took the paper into her hand, and read it carefully, the two priests regarding her all the whilst with a severe scrutiny. She discovered that it contained not only a solemn declaration of her true and steadfast participation of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, but promised, on the event of her attaining the English crown, to do her utmost to extirpate heresy out of the land; and in case of any remissness on her part in such godly and laudable endeavors, re-

nounced all natural right and claim to the throne, now and for ever after."

"There is matter in this that requireth deep consideration," observed she, assuming an indifference she felt not at all.

"And moreover," continued master doctor, producing another paper, "her Highness hath sent here a warrant for your committal to the Tower, in case you hesitate in the immediate signing of what is required of you."

The lady Elizabeth then examined the second paper, and finding it to be a warrant, as had been stated, for her imprisonment, and that it bore Queen Mary's signature, her heart was smote with a sudden fear, for she knew full well, went she to the Tower, her enemies would grant her no peace till they had taken her life. It was well remembered of her, at that moment, that she had been advised to seek, by every means she could, to gain time if pressed on any such matter; but the hapless lady felt a presentiment that, in such an extremity, all such endeavor would be fruitless.

"I pray you lose no time, if it please you, my lady," here observed master chaplain, with some eagerness; "for I promised her Highness I would not stay an hour at Hatfield, without your signature, or yourself in my custody."

"Here is pen and ink ready at hand," said the other, as he brought them from the table where the books were.

"Surely there be no need of such extreme haste," remarked the lady Elizabeth. "There yet remain many matters of doctrine of the which I have no certain knowledge; and my conscience will not allow me to attest my conviction of the truth of that I am ignorant."

"I doubt not you are a sufficient Catholic for the purpose required of you," answered Dr. Crosier; "and, as there can be no delaying now, her Highness's orders are so strict, I promise you, on your dismissing master chaplain with the necessary document, without more words said, I will make it my business to give you daily instruction in every minutest point of faith professed by all true Catholics, till you shall be as learned in them as is my Lord of London himself."

"But grant me some preparation," exclaimed she, as one held out the pen for her, while the other unfolded the paper. "Surely, on a matter so vital, I may have time afforded for proper reflection?"

"Nay, it cannot be," said Sir Topas. "I myself heard her Highness say, the signing of such a declaration would be a test of

your sincerity and affectionateness towards her."

"The which, if you made any to do about," added master doctor, "her Highness would judge your late behavior as hypocritical, and put on the better to hide some treasonable practices you are privately engaged in, of which she hath constant intelligence; and, moreover, I heard her Highness affirm," continued the chaplain with increasing earnestness, "should you attempt to evade the signing of that paper, no punishment should be severe enough for you; for it was plain, whatever appearance you put on, you were in heart a plotter of treason, a black heretic and a false woman."

In vain the poor lady tried all sorts of excuses, and brought forward all manner of pretexts for delay. She wished first to write to her Highness; she would rather defer the signing for a week, till to-morrow at noon: in vain she prayed to be left alone for a single hour—the two priests were inflexible; it was more than their lives were worth to allow of any such thing. Her Highness was imperative, and the signing must be without the delay of a single moment. Bewildered, and in great perplexity of mind, seeing no help for it, and fearful of the consequences if she refused what was required, the Lady Elizabeth was about to take the pen in her hand, when she spied a company of horsemen riding post-haste towards the palace, which, the other two seeing, they regarded each other with some uneasiness, and their brows grew black of a sudden.

"I can tarry here no longer!" cried the chaplain, with more severity than he had yet used. "Hither come the escort to convey you to the Tower."

"Surely never was woman so much her own enemy before!" exclaimed master doctor, with an exceeding stern aspect. "You are hurrying your head to the block."

"I pray you pardon me, but I like not being in such monstrous speed," observed the Lady Elizabeth, at last taking the pen into her hand. At this the two ecclesiastics looked with a sort of smile. "At least I will again peruse what is here writ, that I may not be in ignorance of what I am signing," added she.

"Nay, by the mass, but once reading must serve your turn this time!" exclaimed Sir Topas, somewhat rudely.

"O' my word, lady, this is but trifling with us!" cried Dr. Crosier, in a like uncivil manner.

"By your leave, worthy master doctor, I must needs re-peruse this paper ere I sign,"

answered the lady; and despite all they could say or do, she not only commenced reading of it slowly, sentence by sentence, but made remarks on such passages as seemed to demand observation; wherein she was constantly interrupted by the impatience of her companions, who, at last, got to be so desperate to have her do their bidding without further hindrance or loss of time, that they lost all respect in their behavior, and they looked to have more of the restless eagerness of lunatics than the sobriety of doctors of the church. Nevertheless, she dipped not her pen in the ink till she had come to the end of the paper. At this moment there was a loud outcry heard, mingled with a great knocking.

"What noise is that?" asked she, eagerly, doubtless glad to avail herself of anything that gave her a delay, was it of a single moment. Her two companions appeared more alarmed than she at these sounds; for their hands trembled as the one held the paper and the other the ink.

"The noise matters not!" cried master doctor, vehemently. "Sign the paper on the instant, or be adjudged a confirmed and obstinate heretic, accursed in the sight of God and man!"

"Nay, but so huge an uproar putteth me in some fear of my life," added the lady, with more urgency as the noise increased. "Mayhap there is mischief in it for one or all of us—the house is on fire, or there be thieves broke in? Indeed, I know not what great evil it may not be the herald of."

"Pish!" exclaimed master chaplain. "'Tis nought but the escort, impatient of being kept so long awaiting. Sign—or, without more ado, I must off with you to the Tower."

"Indeed, it be but uncivil of them to be so soon impatient," cried she again; "for, methinks, they have scarce had me to get to the palace gates." At this moment the noise was heard more distinctly as if it was approaching nearer, and seemed to be the hurraing of many voices.

"All's lost!" exclaimed master doctor, furiously dashing down the ink-horn, and hurrying himself out of the chamber; and, at the same moment, master chaplain snatched away the papers, and disappeared with the like celerity: but, just as the lady Elizabeth had got well quit of them, a company of stately gentlemen entered her chamber by another door, followed by a multitude of meaner sort, and, with every demonstration of respect, the foremost of them all did kneel before her on one knee.

"What meaneth this, Sir William Ce-

cil?" exclaimed a lady, in exceeding astonishment, to him.

"It meaneth, an it please you, my gracious mistress," replied he, with much reverence, "that your troubles are at an end. Your sister hath been overtaken by the hand of death, and by all the proper authorities your Highness, without opposition or let of any kind, hath been proclaimed Queen of these realms."

"God save Queen Elizabeth!" eagerly exclaimed the assumed fool, throwing his cap and bells, with a monstrous zeal, far above his head; and every one of that assembly thereupon, with the same heartiness, joined in the cry.

CHAPTER XXXII.

*The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloons,
* * * * **
*His youthful hose well saved; and his big
manly voice,
Turning again towards childish treble,
pipes
And whistles in the sound.*

SHAKESPEARE.

Despitful Flora! Is't not enough of grief, That Cynthia's robbed, but thou must grace the thief? Or didst thou hear Night's sovereign queen complain, Hymen had stolen a nymph out of her train, And matched her here, plighted henceforth to be Love's friend, and stranger to virginity. And mak'st thou sport for this?

BEN JONSON.

THERE was a cloud resting upon the honored roof-tree of New Place—a cloud that cast its shadows over all Stratford, and even over many a fair dwelling far beyond; for the master-spirit, who was the pride and glory of all that admirable neighborhood, had for a long period been so nigh unto death's door, that it had more than once been feared he had crossed the gloomy threshold.

Master Doctor Hall, with no less craft of love than of medicine, had held a desperate conflict with his malady, day after day, and week after week, assailing it in so many divers ways, as though his resources were out of all number; and whenever it seemed to be getting the mastery, bringing forth some new sort of artillery, and some secret stratagem of physic, that made his enemy fain to give up what ground of vantage he

had gained. The skill of other physicians had been required—so ill looked the case; but they so approved what he had done, and were so favorably impressed with his marvellous knowledge of all that related to their art, that one and all decided the patient could not be in better hands, and thereupon left him to his entire care.

Of a surety, he could not have been better provided for. The young physician acted as though he had in his power not only the existence of an individual, but the fame of a nation: nay, the very glory and boast of humankind. Another could not have had that stake in his preservation he had; he must have experienced the common effects of prolonged watchfulness, over-anxiety, absence of necessary rest and food, and continual strain upon the mind when taxing all its powers upon an issue that looked to tremble upon a hair; but he who presided over that sick chamber appeared to claim immunity from the pains and penalties following a deviation from natural habits—he lost all sense of self—moved, breathed, lived, only in the contest he was carrying on. He watched every symptom, considered every remedy, traced every effect to its cause, brought the experience of the sages of his craft to act in alliance with the result of his own observations, and maintained what seemed a hopeless struggle, inch by inch—in sooth, not giving up so much as a hair's breadth till the conviction forced itself upon him that it might be recovered at a future time.

Though amiable and gentle as a woman, it was marvellous to note how entirely he put on the despot, when his patient's safety seemed to demand it of him. He would have no intrusion into the sick-room—not even from the best and dearest of his friends—shutting his heart as closely against the pleadings of the fond Susanna, save when the occasion better warranted her appearance there, as against the arguments of the faithful Simon, who tried many a master-stroke of policy in vain to plant himself within its hallowed walls. He would have help from none at such times, save only from an ancient dame he had hired as a nurse, whose watchfulness, devotion, and freedom from weariness, thirst, or hunger, rivalled his own. She was truly a most venerable object. Her form looked much too feeble for the proper fulfilment of the labor she had undertaken; but the strange brilliancy of her eyes gave evidence of a vigorous spirit, such as the most youthful frame rarely possesses. By such attendants was the sick man, during the critical time his disor-

der maintained the ascendant, nursed and tended; and in this period, his loving friends were fain to content themselves with such intelligence of his condition as they could by chance obtain from them, or from some in the house, who were enabled, at rare intervals, to hold with them a brief communication.

Every where throughout the neighborhood the inquiry was, "How fareth Master Shakspeare?" and one and all were as interested in him as though he was of their flesh and blood. In some, the knowledge of his danger wrought strange effects. Tommy Hart and his merry bedfellow not only lost that ready pleasantry which had made them a proverb throughout Stratford, but wore there features in so sad a fashion, their most familiar gossips hardly knew them. Young Quinney and his wife had taken up their abode at New Place, and it was no small difficulty to say which was the most disconsolate of the two. Both Judith and Susanna were however fain to repress their own sorrows whilst endeavoring to comfort their mother, whose grief touched all hearts.

Sir George Carew^{*} came frequently to Stratford, as though with a view to console the family to whom he was so greatly attached, but it was easy to see he needed consolation as much as any. The strangest effects were observable in Jonas Tictape, who grew as serious as a Puritan, when he first heard that Master Shakspeare kept his chamber; but when it was bruited he was hourly expected to give up the ghost, he shut himself up in his cottage, allowing none to have sight or speech of him, and, as it was verily believed, took no heed of himself whatever.

But in all conditions, age or sex, the same spirit prevailed—for the patient had won all hearts; the poor by his charities—he rich by his excellences—children by his graciousness—women by his courtesies, and men of every sort by his interest in their pursuits and apparent knowledge of every thing that related to them; and there was scarcely a minute of the day in which some fervent prayer was not put up to the threshold of the Most High, for his restoration to health, and to the society of his so numerous lovers.

These prayers were heard, and answered. As soon as it became known, as it shortly did, that a change for the better had taken place in the object of their constant good wishes, then was there a change for the better in the aspect of the whole town. Tommy Hart took his helpmate by the hand, and

repaired to the now melancholy-looking habitation of their good gossip, the woman's tailor, where they made such an outcry, shouting the good news, that presently the door was thrown open, and out bounded the rejoicing Jonas with a summerset that pitched his friend on his back in the middle of the road, which he not attending to, flew down the street, to the huge astonishment of his honest neighbors, whirling round and round, now on his hands and now on his feet, after the old fashion, followed by a pack of little dogs in full chase, evidently, by their frisking and barking, as well pleased as their master.

Dr. Hall had won a famous victory over Death; and it was soon seen how deadly had been the struggle between them. Master Shakespeare was reduced to a very skeleton. The commanding figure that had so well filled the justice-chair could not be recognised in the wasted form that leaned on the arm of his physician as he shuffled across the chamber. His voice also had undergone a like alteration, it having become feeble and shrill as that of a man at a great age. The change struck the sick man as powerfully as it had others, but a gleam of his customary facetious grace broke from him at the time.

"O' my life, doctor," said he, pointing to his hose, that were now much too large, they being in bags, as it were, from his knees to his slippers, "if I might have my will, I would fain leave the world better supported than I am in this sorry plight."

"Thou shalt have thy will, dear heart!" exclaimed a familiar voice near him. The sick man turned round, but saw only his old nurse making a posset for him. He seemed to marvel a little, but in a moment continued to jest on his condition, as he proceeded in his walk.

"Methinks Death has spared me," continued he; "because he began to be ashamed of taking such poor prey, so, out of pity, and, doubtless, not without some contempt, he allows me to find rest for my bones on the earth, instead of under it. I faith, he hath left me much to thank his worship for: item, a voice as pleasant to hear as the tuning of a viol-de-gamba; item, a pair of sticks by way of legs; two of a like pattern for arms; item, a quantity of ribs—might make pegs to hang caps on at small cost; and item, a skull that needs no polishing to grace an anchorite's cell for the nonce."

This pitiful state of things, however, gradually disappeared, to the huge contention of his friends, under careful nursing. Among the most powerful agents that min-

istered to his recovery, was the general desire to assist in some way or other in making it as speedy as possible. With this feeling, all sorts of things were daily sent that might tempt his palate, or strengthen his frame, and Simon and Launce had a sufficiency of work in taking in the delicate chickens and dainty capons, and exquisite sweetbreads, and scores of other tempting things that daily came to the door with the kindest inquiries and heartiest best wishes of their several donors.

Now, Launce, of all things, loved to hear himself talk, and, of all subjects, loved most to talk of himself, and rarely did he fail, when he thought he could secure a listener, of endeavoring to impress upon him a due sense of all the terrible dangers he had been in, and of the wonderful courage with which he had borne himself when sailing with that valiant commander Captain Harry Daring in the Spanish Main. Had he spoken so bravely in Golden Lane, he would have been soon silenced; but Tabitha Tatchpole's apprentice and Master Shakespeare's man were exceeding different personages, and, therefore, he fancied he might readily become a hero at Stratford.

This, however, he found more difficult than he had calculated on, and Bragging Launce became as familiar in that good town, as Ragged Launce had been there in times past, or as Lazy Launce had been in his well-remembered attic in Golden Lane. It was only when he could get hold of some credulous good soul, too simple to doubt, that he was ever listened to with any sort of patience or respect, and among the bearers of the diff'rent gifts that came to his master's dwelling he found many such.

It was rare to see with what skill he led the inquirer after the health of Master Shakespeare, with a little loss of time as might be, right to the deck of the good ship, "The Little Wolf," and this having attained, how rapidly he led her into the terriblest battles, mutinies, storms, and shipwrecks, in all of which he made himself out, if not exactly the captain of the ship, at least, a person to whom the command might have been given with great advantage to all concerned. But enough of this braggart. Nevertheless, a little more will finish his history. His big words imposed upon Peg of the Twiggen Bottle, who overlooked his mean estate, in favor of his being a hero—a character she much affected—but on the wedding-night he showed himself such a craven to one of her former lovers who was present, and made a butt of him, that she drubbed him in the bridal cham-

ber so that he did not feel himself comfortable for a week after.

All this time the sick man was mending rapidly, so that he received visitors as usual, and the chimney-nook in the hall was again the comfortable resting-place of the favored few, who were wont to assemble there; and the jest and the tale went round as briskly as of old. Sometimes an acquaintance or two would join the circle with news of what strange things were doing in London or elsewhere, and often was there much to marvel at, often much to lament, and almost as frequently much to doubt.

The news least liked and most talked of was the mysterious death of that darling of the nation, Prince Henry. Various were the rumors afloat concerning the cause of this sudden and fatal sickness; some talked confidently of poison; and the bolder sort plainly alluded to the king as having been jealous of the general favor in which his admirable young son was held by the people; and, if not instigating, certainly having a guilty knowledge of the deed. But these horrible surmises were not canvassed at New Place. Master Shakspeare was deeply moved at learning of so truly national a loss. He knew it to be a loss never to be repaired.

He had news also of more than one friend, for whom he cherished the liveliest remembrances. There were divers his good gossips and fellows at the globe, of whom and from whom he had occasional intelligence. Of worthy Master Allen, too, still the most thriving of players, and the most honest of men, where among his bears or his nobler animals, he had especial advices. And a like sort of familiar knowledge he had of the city came to him from the court, where he was well pleased to hear his much-loved scholar, the Earl of Pembroke, was rapidly advancing into favor. But there was one to whom his best feelings clung with the like fixedness the devotee regards the emblem of his faith, and never did a thought rise in that direction that was not made yokefellow with a blessing. Need it be said that this was the noble lady, from whom he had separated himself so completely—as it seemed—yet with whom, while he lived, he would be joined in no common bonds.

It was while gradually recovering his health that he became aware of the attachment existing betwixt his admirable young physician and his most estimable gentle daughter. At this he was especially pleased. There was no man living he should

so soon have wished for a son. He felt he owed him no trifling amount of obligation, in the first place for the excessive devotion he had shown for him during more than one critical period of his life; and in the next his high talents in art and his thorough amiableness of disposition pointed him out as likely to make happy his excellent Susanna. He was rarely pleased that they should have come to so good an understanding—albeit he more than once found himself comparing in some astonishment the stately creature that had no long time before received so complacently the adulation of the gayest and noblest of the gayest court in Europe, with the quiet blushing maid fixing her heart and mind upon the thoughtful aspect and unassuming bearing of the young physician.

All this time these two were enjoying a species of happiness peculiarly their own. It looked as though the deep trouble they had endured had given them a keener relish for the exquisite rare pleasure that seemed in store for them. Quiet, grave and unimpassioned, as both had appeared, they entered into the condition of lovers with a depth and intensity of feeling less experienced hearts could have no knowledge of. Each seemed to have dispersed from around the other the cloud which had thrown into blackest shadow all the fairest hopes and dreams of life. And, with a delicate sympathy in the other's past sufferings, each strove to show a brimming measure of that felicity they had previously looked for in vain.

Whilst his patient demanded his utmost vigilance, Dr. Hall would be nothing but the attentive physician; but, when it became evident he might be left to the care of others, he put on the devoted lover with no less singleness of purpose. Many were the pleasant walks he and his fair mistress had through the shady lanes, or the fields of waving corn, and long and earnest the discourse which then and there passed betwixt them. Now came the reign of arms inter-linked, clasped hands, and waists encircled, low-breathed aspirations, blushing replies, an over-brimming joyousness in the present, and daintily conceived plans for the future.

For our young physician this period brought a harvest of sweet thoughts, of such abundance withal, he who reaped it could scarce conceal his astonishment at its excess. It looked as though the goodly qualities of the soil, during the time their development had been checked, had been accumulating, and now thrust themselves forth in produce of the rarest excellence

and the most marvellous abundance. His mind, purified in the furnace in which it had been cast, seemed peculiarly sensitive to all the subduing impressions of the affections. It was no longer the feverish dreams of youth, prematurely created by the villainous artifices of a scheming adventuress; it was the natural operation of the most admirable grace, and the most perfect excellence, on a nature peculiarly disposed to cultivate their exquisite influence. It was an intelligent mind strongly reflected upon by mind of a like sagacity, and one heart operating upon another, the feelings whereof were of the same ennobling nature.

When he considered his good fortune in attaching to himself a creature so excellently gifted, the miseries of former years faded as a snow-flake in the sunbeam. Under her fair sovereignty, he felt raised to the proudest estimation; his reserve did not entirely leave him; he was still grave, reflective, and retiring—but this was constitutional. There were times however when, led along by the stirring spirit of her covetable society, he seemed to break down all the restraints of habit, and his voice became animated by the eloquence of his own thoughts; he spoke, looked, and moved, as a being gifted with all the finer properties of manhood—inhood in its worth, its grace, its nobleness, and its purity.

And our gentle Susanna, was she not moved by a similar agency? Did not the bread of her kindly heart she had cast upon the waters, return to her after many days? Did not her mind, so long thrust into shadow, beam out as a cynosure in the deep night, making her fair neighborhood an atmosphere of light and beauty? To this no more need be said than that she was absolutely and perfectly happy; happy in her own thoughts, and in the thoughts of those nearest and dearest to her; happy in her choice, happy in her hopes, happy in her dreams, happy in the present, and exquisitely happy in the future. Day after day passed by, and, the more intimately she became acquainted with the virtues of the man whose finer qualities she had perceived and done justice to in her earliest acquaintance with him, the more did she congratulate herself on finding, whatever storm might come, she had so famous an anchor to trust to.

Thus this estimable pair, in the days of their honeyed courtship, seemed to live in and for each other; their rambles became longer, their attachment to each other's society more intense. Their senses seemed to become more exquisitely alive to the at-

tractions of external nature. The flowers, the sunshine, the shady lane, the green retreat, the intelligent aspect of the mute stars, and the murmuring music of the gentle river, were to them features of a landscape of such ravishing beauty, that its only type could have been found in that unrivalled landscape in which the first lovers experienced a happiness direct from Heaven.

It shortly became publicly known that they were betrothed—in sooth, some who pretended to be better informed than their neighbors, went so far as to say they knew the very day they were to be married; but it was every where understood that, in a short time, there would be a famous wedding, and they were so well liked that no allusion was ever made to the match without its being followed by a blessing. In honest truth, the approaching event was so universally known, and the persons so intimately connected with it so greatly respected, that did any of their well-wishers get sight of the happy pair in one of their rambles, he would make a circuit so as to avoid disturbing their privacy.

The ceremony so much talked of awaited only the complete recovery of Master Shakespeare; but he seemed in no hurry to bring it about. For this there were divers reasons—first, he saw that they were happy, and much of his happiness depending on seeing theirs, he was desirous this golden state of things should continue as long as possible. Next, he liked not parting with them; they had become, through the influence of their own virtues, the chief objects of his regard, and he could not readily bring himself to loose either. The matter was ultimately settled to the satisfaction of all parties, they agreeing to remain under his roof as long as might be agreeable to him.

He frequently held long and interesting consultations with his fast friend, Sir George Carew, who took a warm interest in their expected nuptials; and there could be no manner of doubt he intended performing some liberal act of kindness; doing something for his fair favorite on this particular occasion.

There was one person, however, who regarded the approaching union with ill-concealed ill feeling—this was no other than Sir Hugh Clopton, by this time transformed into a court-gallant of the first pretensions. Possibly the praise of the gentle Susanna, so frequently heard from his guardian, Sir George Carew, influenced him but little—possibly the interest shown by all the com-

munity in her happiness he regarded with a like indifference; but he liked not that some one should come and bear away from him what he seemed to think could easily have been his own. He held long and serious debates with himself as to the line of conduct he should pursue, and ultimately he came to the wise determination of honoring the subject of his thoughts with a visit.

Taking marvellous pains that every article of his toilet should be impressed into his service in some such a manner as to assist in producing the desired impression, and, after carefully examining the result, and, sat styling himself that there could be no doubt of his perfect success in the experiment he was about to make, he ordered his horse, and took the road from Clopton to Stratford. When he arrived at New Place, Susanna was in attendance upon her father in his chamber. She did not hear the name of Sir Hugh Clopton without some emotion; but it passed away as rapidly as it went, and the expression by which it was followed was of a much less pleasant character.

"Speed thee, wench!" cried her father merrily, "Sir Hugh asketh for thee. Doubtless he is come to offer his congratulations, like a courteous gentleman. Hie thee to the blue-room, then, at once, and pr'ythee use him in thy most gracious fashion."

Susanna made a most gracious reply in the same spirit as she tripped out of the chamber, but she was far from being indifferent as she seemed. She would have avoided the interview, had it been possible, without creating comment, but she invested herself with a woman's proudest spirit to appear in it as became her father's daughter. On her entrance, she found the young knight, examining, with much intentness, as it seemed, the pattern of the siege of Troy on the arras—albeit, he was giving his entire thoughts to the consideration of what he should say, and how he should say the business he had come upon.

"God save yon, Sir Hugh!" exclaimed the damsel courteously. "My father bids me express his acknowledgments for the honor you have done him in visiting his poor dwelling. He trusts all are well at Clopton."

There was a dignity as well as an indifference in this speech that was far from setting the young knight at his ease. He replied in the best courtier fashion, touching his profound respect for Master Shakespeare, and gave his assurance that at

Clopton every one had the good fortune to be in excellent health. Hereupon he endeavored to get a point towards his errand, but he was stopped by an earnest inquiry of his kinsfolk. Having informed his companion that Sir George Carew and his estimable lady were gone to Kenilworth, he once more strove to bring the discourse towards himself and his intentions; but, at his first step, he was interrupted by a string of questions as to divers persons and scenes in and about the neighborhood of the family mansion; and, as soon as these were replied to, there came a long catechism respecting his ancestors, their character and monuments. Thus it continued for a period much beyond what was given to a visit of compliment.

Sir Hugh Clopton was getting more and more discomposed. He was wondrously anxious to address himself at once to the object he had in hand, but he knew not how to commence such a business. He felt a strange awkwardness in the first step, which seemed to throw a terrible stumbling-block in his way; and, when he called to mind how studiously of late she had avoided him, and that, when thrown in his company, with what ceremonious respect she had behaved herself towards him, his chance of a favorable hearing appeared to become more desperate every minute. The fair Susanna all this while looked as though she had met this monstrous fine gentleman for the first time, to whom she accorded the graceful courtesy of a gentlewoman, out of respect for his excellent worthy kinsman, her sworn servant, Sir George Carew.

"Perchance, you are off to some hunting party or another?" said she, at last, "and I am, out of all doubt, much to blame for keeping you from such delectable sport; so I will at once take my leave of you, thanking you, in the name of my most dear father, for your courteous visit."

"Nay, I pray you, Mistress Susanna, leave me not in this way!" exclaimed the young knight, the fine gentleman evidently breaking down under a pressure of natural feelings. "I have much to say to you!—I have much to implore of you! In an evil hour—"

"Ah! I had nearly forgotten," said she, suddenly stopping in the slight advance she had made towards the door. Her aspect became a slight degree more serious, yet there was no sign in it of anger or triumph. "I have also something that ought to be said. It cannot but be known to yon, Sir Hugh, that it is my estimable father's pleasure I should be married next St. George's

day to a worthy gentleman, his friend, one tally made his appearance in the hatter's Master Doctor Hall; a physician of much skill in his art, and of as honorable a nature as man ever possessed. I trust, Sir Hugh, you will do us the honor to grace that occasion with your company. Among your well-wishers, Sir Hugh, ever count on myself as belonging to the sincerest. Be assured that I entertain a firm hope that you will speedily cast aside as weeds that ill-become a soil of much natural goodness, the follies of a thoughtless youth; and if I could see you divested of every such unworthiness, securing yourself the respect which hath ever been so intimately attached to your honorable name, and united with some noble lady who would do credit to your judgment, believe me, Sir Hugh, it would be such infinite satisfaction to me as my poor words cannot express. Fare you well, Sir Hugh, and much happiness attend you!"

Methinks it need hardly be said that, by such a speech so delivered, "the monstrous fine gentleman" was completely silenced: and before he could recover from the stunning blow, that gentle and graceful rebuke gave to his vanity, he found his fair companion had left the chamber. He was not long in doing the same, but as he rode back to Clopton he thought over every word of those golden sentences he had just heard, and in so proper a mood, that from that time forth he became so swayed by their spirit as to cast from him all discreditable tendencies and foolish humors, and take upon himself the nobler characteristics of an honorable gentleman.

Now that it had become well known throughout Stratford and its neighborhood, Mistress Susanna Shakspere was to be married at such a date to that famous physician, Master Doctor Hall, there was a wonderful deal of rejoicing in all quarters. Of all places in the world, be sure the matter was properly discussed in Tommy Hart's kitchen—in sooth, there had been divers consultations on this particular subject, in which, besides Tommy and his helpmate, Jonas Tietape and young Quiney labored with exceeding earnestness.

They sometimes obtained the assistance of Simon Stockfish, who seemed as though capable of speaking on no other points than the nobleness of the master he now possessed, and the worthiness of the one he had once served. It used, however, to take him a monstrous time to make up his mind to place himself where so many questions were sure to be put to him; but having satisfied himself that it would be politic not to answer correctly more than one in ten, he occasion-

ally made his appearance in the hatter's chimney-corner.

Concerning the marriage, they were all agreed that it was what was most to be desired; for both the young physician and his fair mistress were such especial favorites, that nothing could seem so appropriate as their union; but this auspicious event they seemed called upon to distinguish in some remarkable manner, and they considered long and earnestly amongst themselves how this was to be done.

When Jonas Tietape could be drawn from his vagaries, he was forced to give in his opinion to the common stock, which he did after his fashion, whereupon much debating followed, of which the object was to mark the day appointed for the wedding with appropriate revels. Every pleasant pastime was learnedly discussed, and the best ways of having them with due effect set forth in the goodliest manner possible.

As the appointed day approached the ever-honored first of May so closely, it was at last decided that May Games should be performed with all due solemnity—unusual care being taken that every character therein should find the very fittest representative—besides which, provision should be made for minstrelsy; the resources of the town consisting only of one bagpipe, a blind harper, and a lame fiddler, it was resolved that the neighboring villages and towns should be called upon to assist with whatever of a musical sort they had at their commandment. As the decisions of this council, though not expressed with so much cogency as those of the High Bailiff and his co-adjustors, were scarcely less influential, there could be no fear that the eventful day would pass by unnoticed.

Scarce had the sun rose on the memorable morning of the twenty-third of April, when the bells began a merry peal, which called up all who were not getting themselves ready to play their part in the day's revels. In every part of merry Stratford—and well did it deserve that name—there was rare busting about, and running hither and thither, and such a prodigality of jests expended as might have sufficed the small wits of the court from then till doomsday; and yet have had abundance to spare.

The first commencement of the day's sports was seen in the bringing in of the tall tree that had been cut down for a May-pole, and the setting it up in a fair, open space, where its fine colors and finer garlands and streamers could be seen to some advantage. Rare was the display of ribbons and other finery in the youths and

maidens who assisted in the dance round the lofty maypole, that followed its first planting, but their universal mirth and well-disposedness made them still more attractive.

It was while this pleasant sport was going on in full force, that those whom it most concerned were preparing for the grand proceedings of the day. With no slight satisfaction they hailed the arrival of the hour that was to realise their most cherished wishes. In especial, the feelings of Master Shakspeare were of the most intense gratification. He had long studied the character of his young friend, and had perceived in him, under his manifold coverings of shyness and reserve, a nature replete with honorable feelings, virtuous resolves, and manly sentiments. He saw it was scarce possible for him to find any man to whom he could confide his excellent Susanna, with so perfect a confidence in her future happiness. Nothing delighted him so much as the evidences he had met with of their attachment to each other, and so great was his content in their marriage, that it is not going too far to affirm that on this particular morning he was infinitely the most pleasant-humored of the three. Though it could scarcely be said he had recovered his wounded strength and appearance, he was sufficiently full of health and spirits to enjoy himself as absolutely as man could on so choice an occasion.

As for the happy lovers, sedate though they looked, and, as some thought, more grave than such a time warranted, they had as full hearts as they could well have, and minds brimming with the same overflowing measure. In brief, they were as absolutely happy as poor humanity hath any chance to be. Perhaps they had the more enjoyment from having known feelings of so very opposite a sort. They took their places in the procession, and performed their parts in the ceremony, that joined their destinies together indissolubly, with a total abandonment of all things whatsoever but their own infinite contentation.

They became spectators of the pleasant labors of their numerous friends, to do honor to the day graced by an event so welcome to them, with senses too much engrossed by their own happiness to be as mindful of them as they deserved. But this was unobserved by the principal actors therein, who were in such famous good humor with their efforts, they seemed as though celebrating their own particular happiness, rather than the happiness of the two young persons who could hardly be regarded as belonging to their circle.

On this memorable day it was well said of many that never had Jonas Tietape made so worshipful a dragon; nor Tommy Hart rode so capering a hobby horse; never had young Quiney played so right reverend a Friar Tuck; nor the young miller appeared to such rare advantage as Robin Hood; nor was there ever so choice a morrice; in brief, it was well said of the wiser sort, that there had not been in the remembrance of any Stratford man a day of such entire pleasantness as that which had been appointed for the marriage of Master Doctor Hall and Mistress Susanna Shakspeare.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

That blast that nipped thy youth will ruin thee;
That hand that shook the branch will quickly strike the tree.

QUARLES.

Egyptians, dare ye think your highest pyramids,
Built to ont-dare the sun, as you suppose,
Where your unworthy kings lie raked in ashes,
Are monuments fit for him? No, brood of Mylus,
Nothing can cover his high fame but Heaven,
No pyramids set off his memories,
But the eternal substance of his greatness,
To which I leave him.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

"NAY, as I live! By all that's rare, 'tis Ben himself!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, with as huge astonishment as pleasure, as about a year after the events mentioned in the last chapter, Simon Stockfish ushered into his book-room one on whom he had exerted much exquisite policy, in vain, to discover who the stout, bluff, free-spoken stranger was, or what his business.

"I' faith, if it be not the great Ben himself," replied the other joyously, "tis so fine a copy, it may pass for the original among the best judges."

The stranger was no other than Benjamin Jonson, of whom the understanding reader hath already some acquaintance. He was looking more like a hearty yeoman than a London playwright, having under his belt a waist of no ordinary breadth; but the excess of revenue necessary for its subsistence seemed to have kept the outer coverings of his person of less richness than he might have aimed at.

He had had a long journey, out of all doubt, and possibly he had clad himself more roughly than was usual with him; but in

whatever fashion he was clad, he received a most warm and absolute welcome. He was soon made to feel himself at home; a state of feeling by the way, in which he could enter with even much less encouragement than he now received. His friend played the host towards him with equal kindness and courtesy, partly because, putting some faults out of sight, he liked his society and admired his talents, and in a great measure because his arrival seemed to promise news of many of his friends of whom he had been a considerable time without intelligence.

A substantial meal, the principal feature of which was a goodly sirloin, was placed before him on the very whitest napery, flanked with a richly chased silver tankard containing excellent Canary. Ben carefully tucked a napkin within his falling bands, and began an attack on the viands with all the vigor of an old campaigner. Master Shakspeare sat at a little distance from him, in no small measure pleased at the evident enjoyment his friend took in his labor; occasionally rising to place at his commandment something he thought would add to his satisfaction, or laughing at the jests in which his guest indulged, with a heartiness that shewed how completely he understood and appreciated their humor, and when an occasion served, relating one from his own prodigal resources that so diverted the hungry traveller, that he was nigh being choked in the excess of his mirth.

The satisfaction of these two old friends in meeting after so long a separation was of the very heartiest sort. Anecdotes followed on the heels of each other; and jest succeeded jest with a prodigality that was truly marvellous. Some remark on a play would bring forth an account of some player, that both had known—and then came a goodly history of all the ups and downs, the whins and vagaries, the strange sayings, the odd ways, the singular ideas, the wild adventures of divers of their acquaintance, connected in some way or other with the stage. In a little while, the mention of something done at court would produce a whole chapter of amusing gossip, respecting the different personages therein to be found. It was as good as a gallery, they were so hit off to the very life; for if one was at a loss for any part of the picture, it was sure to be happily finished from the experience of the other.

"And so Raleigh is still a prisoner," observed Master Shakspeare.

"More shame to those who made him

one!" was the indignant reply. "'Sdeath! my blood boils, when I think of this noble gentleman, cooped up in stone walls to gratify the mean revenge of that poor Scotch animal, who hates this noble gentleman for towering so high above him. Nevertheless as I can fully testify, he keepeth up his great spirit. I managed to get admission to him in the Tower, and there I paid him a visit, which I shall not very readily forget. Never saw I a man so truly a philosopher, or one while possessed of such a high Roman soul, with such store of learning at his commandment, as was only owned by the most famous worthies of Greece.'"

"You saw him then; how fareth he in this imprisonment?"

"Only so far the worse, as the blade left to rust in the scabbard. There was with him a marvellous deep and learned man, my Lord of Northumberland, with whom he pursueth all manner of strange studies in chemistry; my assured friend, Master Sergeant Hoskins, an excellent poet, Thomas Hariot, an estimable philosopher, and a certain person, Master Doctor Barrell, a most ripe scholar; and amongst these, I had such discourses, as I could have found, methinks, in no other place in the whole world. Such famous speeches, worthy to be called orations; such profound knowledge; such deep and comprehensive learning; such marvellous wisdom, it hath never been my lot to listen to. We had, as well as the Greek and Roman, fragments of Hebrew sages, and snatches of the lore of Arabian poets and philosophers, that made the wisdom of the western world appear as very foolishness."

"Of a truth, I envy you that visit—methinks 'twas as rare a treat as man could wish for."

"Ay, was it, Will. But there was one bitter reflection that robbed it of the better part of its sweetness. Who could think unmov'd, of such choice spirits made to be partakers of a dungeon, who should have had the first place of honor nearest the throne, whilst such honorable places were filled by the vilest scum and dregs of humanity, who would have but disgraced the prison they deserved?"

"A lamentable truth! But, think you not Sir Walter will be given his freedom?"

"Never! His fame as a hero galls one who is a noted coward; his reputation as a scholar hurts his vanity who hath scarcely the knowledge of a pedagogue; and his worth, as a man, confounds him who, even in his vices, is ever grovelling and contemptible. What sympathy can a feeble, vain-

glorious, mud-witted, besotted wretch have for one who is at once gallant, high-spirited, learned, and virtuous?—The sympathy of the wolf for the deer—of the mouse for the lion—of the owl for the linnet. I tell thee, Will, he hates the noble Raleigh, and will not rest till he has his blood—which he will at last take, on some frivolous pretence that will damn him to all posterity.”

“ Raleigh hath lost a powerful friend in Prince Henry—had he lived much longer, I think he would have got Sir Walter his liberty.”

“ At least, he would have tried—but, now that sweet youth is dead, Raleigh hath lost his only safeguard against the murder which hath been so long meditated. But it is useless lamenting,” added Ben Jonson, as he raised a full cup of wine to his lips. “ We are powerless to serve him; but we can have at least the comfort of drinking confusion to his enemies, which I now do with all my heart—more especially referring to one who is a hypocrite in religion, a pretender to learning, a bad husband, a vile father, a false friend, a dishonor to his lineage, and a disgrace to his country.”

Thereupon Ben quaffed off his glass with the satisfaction of one convinced he hath done virtuously. If thus indignant of the undeserved treatment of so great and good a man as Sir Walter Raleigh, how would he have expressed himself, a few years later, when that noble gentleman, after venturing with great risk to his newly-discovered country of Guiana, in hope of satisfying the cupidity of his royal jailor, who hankered after a gold mine there existing, on his return was infamously brought to the block and made the victim to his cowardice!

“ But I will tell you a stranger matter,” said Ben, replenishing his empty platter. “ Ned Allen hath grown as serious as an undertaker’s dog. His talk is of nothing but building hospitals, or colleges for decayed folk. He is determined to set up for a Samaritan, and will take care there shall be plenty of oil and wine provided for such wayfarers as may chance to fall among thieves and get spoiled. None can doubt his heart to be of the best, but his speech hath become the strangest medley spoken by human tongue. If he talk of the Fathers, you would be rarely puzzled with the bear-garden eulogium directed towards them—instead of St. Chrysostom, you will hear him speak of St. Bruno. Polycarp will have to give way to Ponto—and Taurus will take the place of Thomas Aquinas.”

“ This is a new humor,” said Master Shakespeare, laughing heartily. “ I have

marked myself a singular confusion in his speech: but then it has been between the heroes of his bear-garden and those of his playhouse.”

“ I faith, Will, such confusion is none so extraordinary on an occasion,” added the other, with a sly humor working in his eyes. “ I have known as many well-played brutes as brutal players, ere now.”

“ Prythee tell me what fortune you have had of late with your excellent writings.”

“ Fortune, the jade!” exclaimed he, in a more serious tone—“ She go hang! She hath been a damnable stepdame to me: as ever worthy heart was plagued withal. Could it ever be believed that one who hath writ the best comedies, all as well flavo ed with the true attie salt as Aristophanes had writ them in his best days, is forced aside to make room for some unlearned ass, who hath no more art than wit? There is my ‘Volpone,’ now: with no ill-judged pride did I dedicate such a masterpiece to the two learned universities. I will swear it is a very phoenix among plays—that its like hath not been seen in England, nor never will. Yet I know of a sort of fellows, with scarce brains enough to hatch a ballad, who have thrust their crude inventions before it, and, by means of some tickling sauce for the palate of the vulgar, have got them to be preferred. Let them lick their chaps over this savory garbige, say I. If they can stomach such trash, I wold have them feed till they burst. They are not fit to have the choice fare I set before them. It is the nature of such hogs to wallow in the refuse and filth a better tisue would scorn.”

Ben was intent on displaying his weak point; but his friend, who knew how much of worth there was in him, despite his over-appreciation of himself and his contemptuous regard of the pretensions of others, tried to change the conversation. This, however, was no such easy matter, and he found himself obliged to listen to much disparaging remarks on many writers he knew and honored. At last, the meal having been finished and the flask emptied, the last draught drew him into a passing commendation of the wine: thereupon his host availed himself of this, and they were presently in earnest discourse of the wines of the ancients, on which subject Ben poured forth a flood of learning as inspiring as his theme.

Whilst Simon Stockfish cleared away the things and brought a fresh supply of the wine Ben had so commended, Master Shakespeare informed his visitor he had come at a rare time, for to-morrow was the customary day of the Stratford revels.

Ben Jonson seemed much taken with this, heard, there was sufficient cause for his and vowed he had never been in such good fortune as to have hit upon so excellent a time for his visit. He promised he would play no ignoble part amongst the revellers. At this his friend made known to him what strange characters were some he was likely to meet; and he found such entertainment in the description he heard of Jonas Tietape, Young Quiney, and Tommy Hart, that, at his earnest request, they were sent for to afford him present amusement. They came—and, of a surety, they made a night of it.

Ben shook his fat sides most lustily at the humors of the woman's tailor, and the sport afforded that night made the walls of New Place resound again. Their host took an occasion to leave them when their mirth was getting furious, but he found it a difficult matter to get to sleep for the shouting of ridiculous catches and roaring songs they chose to indulge in. This sort of uproar wonderfully disturbed the sense of propriety of Simon Stockfish; and, learning his master had gone to bed, he cudgelled his brains, with small profit, to hit upon some rare stroke of policy by means of which he might be rid of it presently. This he knew could only be done by the dispersion of those who were the busiest peace-breakers, and he found he had a difficult task to effect this with perfect security to himself and credit to his master—two points of equal importance with him.

Little did these choice spirits imagine, whilst so absolutely giving themselves up to jollity, what throes they were causing the grave serving-man, whose lack of speech afforded a copious source of speech in them. Ben Jonson had got them to rehearse before him certain speeches they were to deliver in a magnificent play, styled the Siege of Troy, made by the schoolmaster, destined to be the chief attraction in the Stratford revels of the morrow. He was leaning back in his chair, hardly able to see out of his eyes, his mirth did so puff up his cheeks, with his arm resting on the table, on which stood lights, cups, tankards, and curious shaped bottles, and the other lying across the arm of his chair with an empty glass in his hand. His three associates stood in choice attitudes in the open space before him and the wall; and, as Jonas Tietape was representing Hector, armed with a pot-lid by way of shield, and a spit for spear; Tommy Hart Agamemnon, with a besom handle; and Young Quiney Achilles, with a rolling-pin—each with bare arms, spouting the most terrible fustian ever

appearing so famously amused. It so chanced as Jonas was delivering himself of some most hectoring lines, in rushed Simon Stockfish, his leaden visage a most moving picture of horror and alarm.

"How now, knave?" cried Master Jonson; "how darest thou intrude thyself, unannounced, upon such heroes as these?"

"Speak—answer, slave! or Trojan ghosts shall keep thee company," shouted the assumed Hector, stalking up to him with stately steps.

"Death dogs thy steps, presumptuous varlet!" cried Tommy Hart, strutting forward with Agamemnon strides.

"Nay, good sirs! I pray you, worthy Jonas! excellent gossip Tommy!" exclaimed the alarmed serving-man, turning imploringly from one to the other, "I did not venture without strong warrant, be assured."

"Speak, caitiff! or thy recreant life shall be the forfeit," cried Ben Jonson.

"Excellent valiant sirs," hurriedly exclaimed Simon, not without some apprehension, "some one hath just brought me word that worthy Jonas Tietape's house hath taken fire."

Scarce had the words been spoke, when the three players dropped their several weapons, and rushed out of the chamber. Independently of their consideration for the dogs and other animals, they knew full well that most of the properties necessary for the performance of their famous play were there housed; and they at once made off, in a horrible fright, to endeavor to save them from the devouring flames, leaving Simon Stockfish, for once in his life, highly gratified at the success of his profound policy.

The earliest risers the next morning looked at the gloomy sky with huge misgiving; but, much to their content, as the day grew older, the heavy clouds dispersed, and the visitors were ushered into Stratford with a burst of sunshine, that made the gay scene that presented itself before them a thousand times more cheerful. Again commenced the Stratford revels in all their several varieties, and again a glorious cavalcade filed through the streets, wherein Master Shakspeare was the particular grace and ornament to thousands upon thousands of admiring spectators. This time he rode alone; for the gentle Susanna, now Master Doctor Hall's excellent fair helpmate, was with her friends, riding amongst the gentlewomen who had joined the procession.

With the gentlemen rode Master Benjamin Jonson, wonderfully taken with all he saw and heard, especially with the various

sports which he did command right liberally. His perfect restoration to health made Master Shakspeare appear in such good case as greatly delighted his innumerable admirers; and, possibly, the great danger he had been in appeared greatly to increase the claim on their admiration his own talents had secured.

The great business of the day proceeded admirably; but the grand, unrivalled spectacle of a classical play appeared to take the spectators by storm. The Siege of Troy was looked upon by many as a super-human effort of human intellect; and the wooden horse, supposed to have done such rare service, the invention of Jonas Tietape and young Quiney, for the safety of which the three friends had made such famous use of their legs the previous night, was the source of the most absolute wonder and admiration. Certainly, Master Shakspeare did marvel in no small measure, but he found it horribly difficult to maintain his gravity whilst glancing at his friend, whose ludicrous aspect during the performance it looked impossible to stand against.

But all things have an end; and, though the Siege of Troy was unconscionably long, it did at last reach its conclusion—with no slight regret, by the way, to much the greater part of the spectators, who seemed hardly to know of which they should most approve, the Greeks or the Trojans. Nevertheless, the reader must submit to be hurried from this and many other delectable sights that were attracting delighted crowds on that notable holiday, and be set at once before the choicest sight, which was a grand banquet, given by the high bailiff and corporation in honor of the guest, to whose fair name the proceedings of the day intended to do some sufficient honor.

Certes, this banquet was marvellously imposing, and in consequence of Master Shakspeare's recent recovery from his dangerous sickness, a greater number of guests assembled than the Guildhall had ever contained before. There was a most imposing array of flowers, and laurels, and no lack of plate or napery. The high bailiff sat at the head of the room, with Master Shakspeare on his right, and Sir George Carew on his left; and down a long table, having a cross one at the bottom, sat not only all the notables of those parts, with the more respectable sort of burgesses of Stratford, but many persons of some distinction, fast friends of Master Shakspeare, who had hurried to Stratford once more to renew their acquaintance with one with whom acquaintance was a distinction.

Nothing can be said here particularizing the viands, or describing their number and qualities. It is sufficient here to state that the tables might have groaned with their weight and number. Everything connected with the feast was of the choicest sort, and amongst the company there existed one ennobling spirit of homage to the object of their sympathy and goodfellowship. They were wonderfully enlivened by the company of Ben Jonson, who was in a rare mood for the display of his choice, facetious talent. In this he was well seconded by Sir George Carew, whose exceeding courtesy, and affable pleasant grace won the hearts of all. It was when the wine-flasks had commenced doing their inspiring office, that the attention of the whole of that gallant company was attracted towards Sir George, by his rising from his seat with an evident desire in him to address them. A respectable silence quickly ensued.

"It hath been said," he observed, after a brief preamble touching his pleasure at meeting so numerous and brave an assembly, "that a famous monarch, of times passed, offered a most tempting reward to any one who would invent for him a new pleasure. Certes, had he lived in these days, he would not have had long to wait for what he so required, and methinks it behoveth us, with whom so much of a very exquisite sort have been made familiar, to be no less liberal. We, too, should offer a higher appreciation for the delights that have been so bountifully afforded us, for they are altogether of a nobler kind than such as might have been created for the entertainment of a jaded voluptuary. Our new enjoyments are drawn from that better part of us that constitutes our intelligence, acting in unison with those fine sympathies that do serve to bind us indissolubly to all human things. But, as cannot be unknown to you, we have a source of pride as well as of pleasure in the creator of these exquisite sweet enjoyments. He is one of ourselves. He is our neighbor—our companion—our friend. He is that incomparably sweet gentleman so well known amongst us all—he is our townsman and friend—William Shakespeare!"

Every one had listened with a most pleased attentiveness to the flowing syllables of the old courtier. As his meaning began to break upon them, every eye flashed with eloquent delight; and when the object of his eulogium was betrayed by the mention of his name, there came forth such a hearty burst of applause as stopped his speech for some few moments.

"Of his excellence in the art he professes," continued the speaker, "there hath already been ample testimony. He hath obtained such repute, and such gain in its exercise, as hath never been possessed by by any in the same art. But it is with no small gratification I find myself enabled, from personal knowledge, to advance, that his worth as a man keepeth such fair pace with his merit as though they were twin-born. I feel assured those who know him will agree with me in the opinion that in him the gifts of the heart are not less powerful than those of the mind. Such is sweet Willie Shakspeare—our Shakspeare, of Stratford upon Avon."

Again a burst of loud applause broke forth from the company, testifying their acknowledgments of the propriety of this praise.

"Filled with these impressions," he added, "I must needs say I look for your complete contentation to a proposition I have risen to submit to you. In this most honorable of days—for such surely it should be styled, having given birth to two such distinguished characters as Shakspeare and St. George—we have been employed in various devices for showing how gratefully we look upon it for having bestowed upon us our rare townsman and friend—let us crown our proper task with drinking, in full glasses, of the choicest wine before us, in this sort—Here's to thee, sweet Willie Shakspeare, and numberless happy returns to thee of this golden day!"

At the conclusion of this goodly speech such acclamations arose, as made a very tempest, at it were, throughout that chamber. Scarcely had it subsided, when Master Benjamin Jonson sprang to his feet, and began a comment on what had so moved the company. He was unknown to nearly all, but his powerful manner of speaking, and an air of free and jovial humor with him, got him abundance of listeners. His preface of his disadvantages in being a stranger to the friends of one whom he had ever regarded as the best and noblest of men, it is unnecessary to repeat, nor is there need he should be followed in the prodigality of quotations from Greek and Roman authors with which he chose to lard his discourse. Methinks it will be best to give no more than this, the marrow of what he said:

"We are told, my masters, in a certain classic author of my acquaintance, that there were great men before Agamemnon, but, before the Agamemnon of our *Iliad*, there were no great men; in brief, so far from it, all who were his predecessors in

the marvellous talent which hath raised him to so proud an eminence, were but as dwarfs compared with him. His greatness smacked of those days of which it was said—there were giants. To what hath been already advanced by one so admirably qualified by his scholarship, by his far distant travels, and by his long intimacy with the object of his well deserved praise, to speak on such a subject and fully and entirely to the purpose, I can make no addition worthy of note. It hath not been my good fortune, like him, to have lived amongst you, nevertheless, I have had many opportunities of studying the fair page he hath so admirably got by heart. I have known him to whom I allude and loved him long, honored his genius beyond that of any living or dead, and regarded his worth with a kind of reverence. I cannot, therefore, be expected to be backward when a way of honoring, what I honor so exceedingly, is under discussion. I must needs, at such a call as we have just heard, be the first to answer: therefore do I now repeat, with all earnestness of soul, 'Here's to thee, sweet Willie Shakspeare, and numberless happy returns to thee of this golden day!'

Amid a storm of plaudits, no less loud than followed the former speech, Master Shakspeare was seen to rise from his seat. He looked admirably, with health in his cheek, and pleasure in his eye, and vigor in every manly limb, and, as he directed his gaze down the line of friendly faces turned towards him with looks of mingled reverence and affection, his gaze seemed to brighten with the purest happiness, and his form to dilate, as it were, with the most exalted pride. He began to speak, at first deliberately, with words of ordinary acceptation, as he mentioned the honor that had been done him, and his unworthiness to express the grateful sense of it he entertained; but, when he advanced more into the subject, he got free of the spirit of form and ceremony that he had been struggling with. He spoke of his early years, and showed how much he was indebted to Stratford for whatever had given him the means of taking the place amongst them he sought; and, knowing and feeling his obligations, it could not be surprising that he had chosen it as the spot in which he desired to live out the remainder of his days.

"A few years only have passed," said he, "since I traversed foreign lands, where my eyes were witnesses to many strange and wonderful things. I stood where fire and ashes have burned and buried two large and noble cities, yet, with many such marvellous

matters about me, I thought of Stratford, I beheld the yellow Tiber flowing in the honored neighborhood of ancient Rome ; I floated on the dark lagunes of once triumphant Venice ; and I gazed in transport on the blue waters of the Auriatic Sea ; but they were to me as though they never were, when I thought of the less imposing beauties of our exqnise Avon.

" And since I have returned to them, what a balm hath visited me in their looks !—river, wood, and sky ; the green lane, the flowery heath, the corn-field, the orchard, and the grove, have come upon me like the faces of ministering angels seen in dreams, giving assurance of health's comfort, and the soul's repose, never to be gainsaid. With these have been associated many a gallant spirit, overflowing with generous sympathy—many a tender heart prodigal of its sweetest solace—much admiration, some reverence, and more good-will. It cannot, therefore, be thought surprising I should gather matter of infinite contention in finding my ark at rest in so admirable a spot.

" I have to thank you for your good wishes. When a boy, I remember me well, in the prospective my young ambition stirred my fancy with, I saw in the remotest distance some such proud scene as the present. Its happy accomplishment looks as if Destiny hath done for me all that had been promised, and that I must prepare me for a change where alteration is unknown.—Should it so chance that I live not to see another anniversary of the day you have so greatly glorified, accept, I beseech you, my grateful thanks for this bountiful proof of your desire for my honor and well-being, and be assured I feel both proud and happy in your favorable opinion, which it hath been as much my wish to possess, as it shall be my duty to retain."

The applause which here followed, and the various enthusiastic commendations from other quarters, must be left to the understanding reader. The scene was a proud one, and none regarded it with feelings of such exquisite gratification as the affectionate Susanna and her loving husband, who looked on the pleased triumphant features of their honored parent with feelings of mingled reverence and affection. The reader, however, must be content he should leave the place where his hero received those well-merited honors, and accompany him back to his own dwelling. Before retiring to his chamber, he took a light, and appeared to feel a singular pleasure in going over the few pictures, examining some of the rare books, and one or two of the best examples

of antique furniture. He seemed to dwell upon them with a more than ordinary earnestness.

Anon he drew himself away from them, and, having entered his own chamber, sat himself down by the open casement, and, resting his head upon his hand, leaned out, gazing upon the blossoming orchard, the pastures, and hedge-rows, and all the features of a lovely landscape then spread out before him, over which the moon, riding high and clear, occasionally obscured by quick-passing clouds, appeared to bathe every object in an atmosphere of supernatural beauty. His thoughts seemed spiritualized by the touching aspect of the scene he looked on.

Not very far removed from the moon's orbit, he observed a star with an exceeding bright and strange brilliancy. While he gazed, there suddenly entered into his mind the conviction that the soul of his long-lamented Hamnet inhabited its precincts. Master Shakspeare lived again in the past—a holy and a tranquillizing spirit seemed to take possession of him, that brought him, as it were, into immediate communion with the immortal nature of that glorious boy of whom he had been so proud, and whose premature divorce from his embraces he had lamented, with more than a lover's constancy in a first and only passion. His soul was subdued by the force of early memories—affections, aspirations, anticipations, once so devoutly cherished, he clung to as doth a drowning wretch to the tangled weed upon the perilous shore whereon he hath suffered shipwreck. Yet in all this abandonment to so ancient a sorrow, there came a sense of present relief beaming like a Pharus through the gloom of a troubled night upon the ocean, that did calm his perturbed spirit most admirably.

He turned from the casement, and in a few minutes was resting his honored head upon his pillow. He shortly fell into a light slumber, half-waking and half-dreaming, in which indistinct images of things presented themselves, mixing the past, the present, and the future in strange confusion. At one time his thoughts wore the rosy hues of his early life, and the visions that had filled his solitude with fairy shapes and heavenly scenes came to him, as doth the sudden restoration of sight to one who hath been blind many years. Anon rose forms of a more endearing loveliness, every limb and feature teeming with feminine truth and passionate devotedness ; the last bearing the likeness of the noble lady whose rare qualities of heart and mind had held his senses in

such strict yet honorable subserviency. Then came memorials of triumphs accomplished, of honor won, of supremacy acknowledged—a most imposing retinue : and at last all seemed to mingle into one—a golden mist penetrating and obscuring all, so that he could get but obscure snatches of what had awhile since appeared so distinctly.

One of the very last objects that presented itself was a face that rapidly changed from a feminine aspect of immortal beauty to an old crone, which was presently succeeded by a lovely smiling youth, in a beckoning attitude ; but hardly had he recognized its familiar shape, when a black cloud surrounded its outline, and it began perceptibly to fade away.

At this period he became aware of a strange sensation, like a small flame creeping up his extremities. The cloud grew blacker round the indistinct image of the intelligent aspect he had loved with such entireness. The flame crept up above his knees. The cloud encompassed the figure of the child, passing over it like a thick film, and gathered round the dreamer's head in a heavy volume. The flame crept up his legs to his body. The inky cloud passed over the exquisitely-smiling aspect, and became as a pall before the dreamer's eyes. The flame crept up to his heart, at the same moment that a darkness enveloped him too black for a ray of light ever again to penetrate.

All the revellers were fast locked in their first sleep, and the whole town seemed to slumber no less profoundly, so tranquil was its aspect in the calm moonlight ; but if any where there existed a perfect repose, surely it was in a certain part of the meadows bordering on the river. The Avon, of a surety, still pursued its course, but it was as with a lethargy that threatened to check its career. The mill had stopped, and the mill-stream was therefore dumb. For a marvel, neither beast nor fowl gave evidence of existence. The moon shone clear and cold, in a sky traversed with quick, gloomy clouds, now giving the river an aspect of molten silver, and making visible the farms, the mill, the straggling town, and the towering church ; anon, leaving all in impenetrable darkness.

Suddenly there arose a low wail ; it was not easy to pronounce its cause, for it partook of the moan of the wind among the trees, and the just audible diapason of the church-organ heard afar off. It gathered force and character every moment and

grew into a solemn chant, or lament, so touching, so subduing, it might have passed for a Miserere, sung by a company of spectral monks in some ruined abbey.

At this time, there might be seen innumerable specks high in the atmosphere. These presently grew upon the eye till they took the shape of figures of extraordinary smallness, each clad in a cloak of inky blackness ; and as they all came in a body towards the meadows, it might readily be known that they sang in solemn chorus the following words :

THE FAIRY REQUIEM.

I.

Fair courtiers of the fields and woods,
Rare minstrels of the skies,
Put off gay vests and flaunting hoods,
Attempt grave harmonies.
The funeral cloak, the church-yard chant,
Comprise whatever ye most want.

II.

Ye lillies pure, and sweet jonquils,
Lone violet, qu' enly rose,
Ye pansies, kingcups, daffodils,
Forswear your gallant shows ;
Ye marigolds, so proudly dress'd,
A darker suit becomes ye best.

III.

And all things that are fair and good,
Your bravest shapes give o'er ;
The darling of your brotherhood
Belongs to you no more.
Mourn ! mourn ! for such another one
Shall ne'er be found beneath the sun.

IV.

The earth hath lost its fairest grace,
Gift ne'er to be supplied,
And fails to be a fitting place
For fairy forms to hide.
Here, losing all we might befriend,
Our pleasant rule is at an end.

V.

Farewell, then, each loved bud and flow'r ;
Farewell the verdant mead,
The fragrant air, the secret bow'r,
Soft fern and towering reed.
Bearing, in solemn rite we come,
Our honored SHAKSPEARE to his HOME.

As the innumerable multitude approached, the attentive spectator could not fail of observing that, in the midst, was a sort of circle, at the head of which two figures might have been noticed, so far like the rest in wearing black cloaks, but differing from them in this important matter—each wore

on its head what looked to be a golden crown. In the centre, thus surrounded, it was difficult to make out what had a place—it bore the appearance of a thin, gray film, having much the resemblance—though too indistinct to pronounce decidedly—of a human figure and countenance, floating upon the air. Afterwards came a countless crowd of the small figures, in their inky

garments, and the doleful wail of their numerous voices sounded like a funeral dirge.

Presently a huge mass of clouds came upon the moon, and when she emerged from behind this black shield, the same deep stillness reigned that had a moment since wrapped the whole neighborhood as closely as if the place formed a sepulchre in the midst of a mighty desert.

HERE ENDETH THE STORY OF
THE SECRET PASSION.

NOTE.—This pleasant task is ended. This labor of love hath been brought to a conclusion. There now only remaineth one thing to be done ere the courteous reader, and the doubtless too-ambitious author, who hath so long and largely demanded his attention, part—of a surely never to meet again in such honorable company. He cannot close an acquaintance carried over so many pages, without expressing a hope that, notwithstanding manifold defects, for which he prayeth a gracious indulgence, his excellent worthy friend has received some pleasure at this picture of an age that in its many golden features has not been equalled in latter times, and this portrait of greatness never excelled in any. To those of his readers, slowly and heedfully descending the hill of life, he desireth such absolute perfect ease at the end of the journey, as tired traveller never had glimpse of, with many inestimable memories with which to rejoice such as they leave behind; and to those who are but climbers in the same path—to the exquisite fair creature who hath carried her generous sympathies through all the varying scenes here set down, he wishes the fullest measure of content in her affections her prodigal young heart can sigh for: whilst to the young gay gallant, glowing with all life's richest impulses, he wishes numberless opportunities for noble adventure, and much comfort with his lady.





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